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THE
MEDITATIONS

OF
Augustinus Augustinus, Bishop of Hippo
ST. AUGUSTINE,

HIS
**TREATISE OF THE LOVE OF GOD, SOLILOQUIES,
AND MANUAL.**

WITH
Select Contemplations
FROM
St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, and St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux
ST. ANSELM AND ST. BERNARD.

TRANSLATED BY
GEO. STANHOPE, D.D.
Dean of Canterbury, and Chaplain in Ordinary to her Majesty.

LONDON:

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1818.

TO HER
ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
PRINCESS ANNE OF DENMARK.

May it please your Royal Highness,

THE following Devotions do in their original language abundantly recommend themselves to the world, not only by their own intrinsic worth, but by the authority of those venerable names, among whose works they are published. And since this last advantage is what the English cannot receive from the character of the translator, your Royal Highness will, I hope, have the goodness to pardon his ambition, in presuming to supply that defect, by the honour of your Royal Highness's patronage and acceptance. That holy zeal, which they are intended to kindle in others, good men behold with great satisfaction already shining bright in your Royal Highness; so that their proper and utmost efficacy to be attained with regard to you, Madam, is the cherishing and exercising that devotion and piety, which I pray God they may in some degree be serviceable for inspiring common readers with.

May the Fountain of all goodness preserve your precious life, and continue your Royal Highness long to us, a bright example and a signal blessing to this and future ages! May he hear and grant the daily petitions of his church, endue you with his Holy Spirit, enrich you with his heavenly grace, prosper you with all happiness, and bring you to his everlasting kingdom! These, Madam, I beg leave, with all humility and most profound respect, to assure your Royal Highness, are the sincere, earnest, and constant prayers of,

May it please your Royal Highness,

Your Royal Highness's

Most obedient, and

Most devoted Servant,

GEO. STANHOPE.

April 12, 1701.

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St. Augustine's MEDITATIONS.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

A Prayer for Reformation of Life.

INSPIRE my soul, O Lord my God, with a holy desire of thee, my chief, my only good, that I may so earnestly desire as diligently to seek thee, so successfully seek as to be happy in finding thee ; make me so sensible of that happiness in finding, as most passionately to love thee ; so effectually to express that love, as to make some amends for my past wickedness, by hating and forsaking my former evil courses, and entering upon a conversation exemplarily pious for the time to come.

Give me, dear God, hearty repentance, an humble and contrite spirit ; make my eyes a fountain of tears, and my hands liberal dispensers of alms, and unwearied instruments of good works. Thou art my King ; reign absolute in my heart, subdue and expel thence all rebellious passions ; quench all the impure burnings of fleshly lusts, and kindle in it the bright fire of thy love.

Thou art my Redeemer, beat down and drive out the spirit of pride, and impart to me, in much mercy, the treasure of thy own unexampled humility and wonderful condescension.

Thou art my Saviour, take from me the rage of anger; and arm me, I beseech thee, with the shield of patience.

Thou art my Creator, root out from me all that rancour and malice whereby my nature is corrupted; and implant in me all that sweetness and gentleness of temper, which may render me a man made in thy own image, and after the likeness of thy own Divine goodness.

Thou are my most merciful and indulgent Father, O grant thy own child those best of gifts; a firm and right faith, a stedfast and well-grounded hope, and a never-failing charity.

O my director and governor, turn away from me, I beseech thee, vanity and filthiness of mind, a wandering heart, a scurrilous tongue, a proud look, a gluttonous belly; preserve me from the venom of slander and detraction, from the itch of curiosity, from the thirst of covetousness, ambition and vain-glory; from the deceits of hypocrisy, the secret poison of flattery; from contempt of the poor, and oppression of the helpless; from the canker of envy, the fever of avarice, and the pestilential disease of blasphemy and prophaneness.

Prune away my superfluity of naughtiness, and purge me from all manner of injustice, rashness, and obstinacy; from impatience, blindness of heart, and cruelty of disposition.

Incline me to obey that which is good, and to comply with wholesome advice; enable me to bridle my tongue, and to contain my hands from wrong and robbery. Suffer me not to insult the poor, to defame the innocent, to despise my inferiors, to treat my servants with severity and scorn, to fail in due affection towards my friends and relations, or in kindness and compassion towards my neighbours and acquaintance.

O my God, thou fountain of mercy, I beg thee, for the sake of the Son of thy love, dispose me to

the love and practice of kindness and mercy; that I may have a tender fellow-feeling of my brethren's afflictions; and apply myself cheerfully to rectify their mistakes, to relieve their miseries, to supply their wants, to comfort their sorrows; to assist the oppressed, to right the injured, to sustain the needy, to cherish the dejected, to release them that are indebted to me, to pardon them that have offended me, to love them that hate me, to render good for evil, to despise none, but pay all due respect to every man. Give me grace to imitate those that live well, to avoid and beware of them that do ill; to follow all manner of virtue, and utterly abandon and detect all sort of vice: make me patient in adversity, and moderate in prosperity. *Set a watch before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips:* (Ps. cxli. 3.) Wean my affections from things below, and let them be eager and fixed upon heaven and heavenly things.

CHAP. II.

*An Act of Self-accusation, and imploring
the Divine Mercy.*

THOU, Lord, who hast formed me, knowest the work of thy own hands, and yet, because thy creature, I have been bold to ask many and great mercies, though *less than*, and altogether *unworthy of*, the *least of all thy mercies*. (Gen. xxxii. 10.) I acknowledge, O my God, with shame and sorrow, that not only the gifts and graces I have been imploring all this while, are in no degree my due; but that many and grievous sufferings and judgments are what I have justly deserved at thy hands. But when my soul feels itself sinking under the weight of this melancholy reflection, the publicans, and harlots, and sinners, (Mat. ix. 36.) those wandering and lost sheep, (Luke xv. 4.)

which the good Shepherd sought so carefully, drew back from the very brink of the hellish precipice so seasonably, brought home upon his shoulders so joyfully, and laid in his bosom so affectionately; these raise my drooping spirits, and give new life to my hopes. For thou, my God, thou hast made all things by thy power, and art wonderful in all thy doings; yet art thou most wonderful, and exceeding glorious in thy works of pity and love. In this sense too is that most true, which thou speakest of thyself by the mouth of thy servants. *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* (Ps. cxlv. 9.)

And what was said of one particular person, we may most truly apply to thy people in general, *my mercy will I not take from him.* (Ps. lxxxix. 24. 28.) For thou abhorrest, despisest, forsaketh no man; but such only as, lost to all sense of their own duty and happiness, do first despise and forsake thee.

Hence it is that thou dost not only not strike when thou art not angry, but even when thou art most justly so. Thou givest good things liberally, upon the request of those wretches who have provoked thee to anger. O my God, the horn of my salvation, and my refuge, I am sadly sensible that I am one of those miserable wretches; I have provoked thy wrath, and done evil in thy sight; and yet thou holdest thy hand. I have sinned, thou hast suffered: I have offended, and still thou bearest with me. If I repent thou sparest; if I return, thou receivest me with open arms; nay, even while I delay, thou waitest patiently for my coming back to thee. Thou callest me to thee, when I go astray; thou invitest me while I am deaf to thy gracious calls; thou stayest till I shake off my wicked sloth; and, when thy prodigal child at last bethinks himself, thou meetest and embracest him most gladly. Thou instructest my ignorance, comfortest my sorrows, keepest

me from falling, raiseth me up when I am fallen, givest when I ask, art found when I seek thee, and openest the door when I knock. (Matt. vii. 7.)

Thus, O God of my salvation, I have nothing to offer in my own excuse; no plea to make when thou chargest me with folly. There is no refuge for me, but in thy goodness and protection; no place to hide me in from thy all-seeing eye. Thou hast shewed me the right way; thou hast taught me how I ought to walk in it; thou hast threatened the torments of hell to affright me from wickedness; and promised the joys of heaven to encourage my obedience.

And now, O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, perfect, I beseech thee, these gracious designs upon thy servant; possess me thoroughly with thy fear, that I may not dare to incur thy threatenings; and support me with the joy of thy salvation, that I may be filled with thy love, and cheerfully run the race that leadeth to thy gracious promises. Thou, O Lord, art my strength, my God, my refuge and only deliverer: O be thou pleased to inspire my soul with proper thoughts of thee: teach my tongue fit words to call upon thee acceptably; and enable my hands, and every member, to do the thing that pleaseth thee. I know full well that there is one way of pacifying thy wrath, one offering which thy mercy will not reject. *The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit, a broken and a contrite heart my God will not despise.* (Ps. li. 17.)

Yet even this I cannot give my God, unless he first vouchsafe to give it me. And therefore, O *thou Father of lights, from whom every good thing cometh*, enrich me, I beseech thee, with this, I ask no other treasure; let this be my introduction into thy presence, this my defence against the assaults of spiritual enemies; this my fountain of tears to

quench the flames of sin ; this my sure retreat from the fury of inordinate passions and desires.

Suffer me not, O thou strength of my soul's health, suffer me not, I beg, to be one of those weak Christians, who for *a time believe, and in time of temptation fall away*. (Luke viii. 13.) But cover thou my head in the day of battle ; for thou, thou only art my hope in the day of trouble, and my safety in the time of danger. (Ps. cxl. 7. xxvii. 1.)

Thus do I come to thee, *my light, and my salvation*, imploring the blessings of which I stand in need, and declaring the miseries of which I am afraid. But in the midst of this address, I feel a check from within ; my conscience stings, and my heart misgives me ; love bids me hope, but sense of sin bids me fear ; and dread of thy displeasure damps that zeal with which my heart approaches thee : when I reflect on my own doings, I cannot but despond ; when I look up to thy goodness I am full of hope. The kindness of my God invites and pushes me forward, the wickedness of my own heart dismays and pulls me back. And all my faults appear in such ghastly shapes before my eyes, as almost hinder a holy confidence, but quite beat down the boldness of presumption.

CHAP. III.

*The Sinner's Lamentation for his Prayers
not being heard.*

THUS is my soul distracted with different passions, when I appear before the Divine Majesty. And how, alas ! should it be otherwise ? For with what face can that man entreat a favour, who hath deserved nothing but hatred and indignation ? What rashness is it to ask glory, when

punishment only is his due? The malefactor provokes his judge, and, instead of satisfying for his offence, he expects to be honoured with crowns and rewards: he lies under sentence of condemnation, and is it not insolent to sue for a bounty, to which he hath no manner of pretence? A stupid child provokes a most affectionate father, and is it not yet a greater provocation to assume to himself the claim of inheriting, till he have first retracted his undutiful behaviour? This, O my Father, I confess with grief to be my own case, I ask life, and have deserved death; I have been disloyal to my King, and yet have the confidence to fly to him for protection; I have despised my Judge, and armed his angry justice against my guilty self, and yet this very Judge I betake myself to for succour. I have stopped my ears against the commands of a father, and yet I take upon me to depend upon him for his paternal affection and care.

To thee, I come; but, oh! how long do I make it before I come? how much precious time do I trifle away in this most important, most necessary affair? My feet, alas! are swift to ruin, but slow in the way that leads to life and safety. I run after sickness, and wounds, and death, and take no care to shun the darts which made those wounds, even when I have felt the smart, and am healed of the sore. I prevented not those dangers which might have been avoided, and am at last awakened into a sense of them, when they have brought me to the very gates of the grave. I have added to my plagues by multiplying my transgressions, and torn open my old wounds, by relapsing into my former evil courses; and those maladies which the spiritual physician had cured, the frantic patient hath again brought upon himself: the sore, which was skinned over, now breaks out afresh, because inflamed by that repeated folly, which hath

forfeited the mercy extended before. I know who hath declared, that *when the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, all the righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned.* (Ezek. xviii. 24.) And if this righteous man, when he falls into sin, lose all the benefit of his former righteousness, what good can be expected for the ineffectual remorse of that sinner, who commits evil, and repents of it, and then does the same evil again: this is to me a mortifying thought; to me, who have so often *returned with the dog to the vomit, and with the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.* (2 Pet. ii. 22.)

How oft I have offended, it is not in my power to remember: but this I own with a heavy heart, that, in general, I have taught men how to sin, and made those wise and skilful in wickedness, who lived before in happy ignorance of it. I have persuaded them who were averse, forced them that resisted me, and readily complied and taken part with those whose inclinations were to do amiss. I have laid snares for those who walked securely; betrayed those into the pit, who desired to be informed in the right way; and, that I might dare to be guilty of those things, I have dared to forget and drive out of my mind those good principles, and great obligations of gratitude to so good a God, the which should have restrained me from them.

But, how faulty soever my own memory may be, yet I have to deal with a just and terrible Judge: *one who seals up my iniquities in a bag, and spies out all my ways. And though thou hast holden thy peace, and hast been still, and refrainest thyself a long time, yet I dread to think the day will come, when thou shalt cry like a travailing woman, and destroy and devour the ungodly at once.* (Job xiv. 17. Ps. cxxxix. 2. Isa. xlii. 14.)

CHAP. IV.

An Act of Fear.

THE Lord, even the most mighty God, shall come, I know thou shalt appear, and not always keep silence: (Ps. l. 1, 2. 4.) Then shall thy glory be seen, then shall thy voice be heard, then thy terrors felt by all the world; when a fire shall devour before thee, and a horrible tempest be stirred up round about thee. When thou shalt call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that thou mayest judge thy people. And must our sins, which we now so industriously conceal, must every aggravating circumstance be then laid open, before so many thousand millions of witnesses? Must I be then upbraided before so many troops of angels and saints, with not my evil deeds only, but even with the sins of word and thought? Must I stand then helpless and friendless before so many judges? Must I be confounded with the reproaches of so many eminent patterns of piety and virtue, whose examples I refused to follow? Must I stand the shock of so many witnesses, who will testify against me how often their charitable advice hath been given me to no purpose, and how ineffectual all the good they did was to provoke my imitation! Blessed God! what shall I have to say, or how shall I find an evasion? The very apprehension racks me at this distance; my conscience flies in my face; and I have this dismal prospect continually in view. I see, and daily lament my danger, and every vicious disposition helps to dress up the woeful scheme. My secret imaginations sting me, my covetousness fetters me, pride accuses, envy gnaws and consumes me, lust inflames, intemperance shames me; detraction tortures, ambition supplants, violence and

fraud upbraid; anger disorders, gentleness makes me secure, sloth overcomes, hypocrisy cheats me, flattery makes me effeminate, applause and favour vain, slander full of anguish.

These, my great, my only deliverer, these are the fierce nations that make war against me: these the acquaintance I have been bred up with; this the company I have delighted to frequent, and contracted the most accurate familiarity with. Thus the objects of my love condemn me, and to my shame and dishonour. These are the friends I have trusted, the teachers I have learned of, the masters, or rather the tyrants, I have lived in subjection to; the counsellors I have been governed by, the companions I have lived and acted with.

Woe is me, my God, that I have thus long dwelt in Mesech, and had my habitation among the tents of Kedar. (Ps. cxx. 5, 6.) For sure, whatever reason David had, I have much greater to lament, that *my soul hath long dwelt among them that are enemies unto peace.* But thou, O Lord, art still my hope and stay. *In thy sight, it is true, shall no flesh living be justified.* (Ps. cxliii. 2.) I put not, therefore, any trust in the sons of men: for if thou, *Lord, shouldest be extreme to mark what is done amiss*, who among them is there, that *might abide it?* (Ps. cxxx. 3.) And therefore, unless thou prevent the sinner with thy mercy and pardon, for what hath been done amiss, there cannot be any righteous to be glorified, any qualified for a reward of what hath been done well.

Therefore it is, my God and my salvation, that I believe in thee, as knowing that *thy goodness leadeth to repentance.* How sweet are those words of thine to my throat! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth, that *no man cometh to thee except the Father draw him*, and that *him who cometh to thee thou wilt in no wise cast out.* (Rom. ii. 4. Ps. cxix.

103. John vi. 37. 44.) Since, then, thou hast not only instructed me in, but even given me new life, by the knowledge of this truth, and thus again made me thy own creature; I do with all imaginable earnestness, with all the sincerity and zeal, my heart is capable of, beseech thee, Almighty Father, together with thy most dearly beloved Son, and thee, O best beloved Son, with thy most sweet Comforter, draw me, that I may run after thee, and be *delighted with the odour of thy precious ointments*, (Cant. i. 3, 4.)

CHAP. V.

An Address to the Father in the Son's Name.

I CALL upon thee, my God, yea, even upon thee do I call, who declarest thyself *nigh unto all such as call upon thee in truth*. (Ps. cxlv. 18.) Yea, thou thyself art truth, and therefore teach me, for thy mercies sake, to perform this service as I ought; for without thee I know not how to please thee; and therefore do make it my most humble and earnest request to be taught by truth itself. All wisdom without thee is no better than folly, and to know thee alone, is the sum and perfection of knowledge. Inform me, therefore, O Divine wisdom, and make me to understand thy statutes. For I am fully persuaded, that he, and he alone, is *blessed whom thou nurturest and teachest in thy law*. (Ps. xciv. 12.)

My desire is to call upon thee, and to do it in truth: but what can calling upon truth itself in truth mean, except applying to the Father by the Son? Therefore, holy Father, thy word is truth, and the beginning of all thy word in the gospel hath told us, that, *in the beginning was the word*. (John i. 1.) In that word of truth I call upon

thee, O essential and original Truth, and beg to be directed in, and thoroughly taught, the truth.

And what can be more delightful than to address Him that begot, in the name of his only begotten? than to move the Father to tenderness by the mention of his own dear Son? than to appease the wrath of a king, by interposing the darling of the family, the heir of all his dominions? These are the powerful methods used by malefactors for release out of prison; by slaves and captives for obtaining freedom; by condemned persons for pardon; nay, powerful enough to prevail, not for pardon only, but even for favour and advancement too. A king's anger cools instantly, if the offenders are such favourites of the prince, as to make use of his name and interest: and servants find it no hard matter to come off without blows, if the children employ their pretty endearments in their behalf. Since then these methods are so successful below, why should they not have the same good effect above? I will beg the almighty Father, for the sake of his almighty Son, to *bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto his name.* (Ps. cxlii. 7.) Loose me, Lord, from the bands of my sins, for the sake of thy only, thy co-eternal Son; and by the intercession of that dear, that Divine image and brightness of thy glory, now sitting at thy right hand, be reconciled to a poor sinful wretch; and, instead of that death my wickedness deservedly threatens me with, raise and restore me to a life of hope and blessedness.

This is indeed the only advocate I can employ: for, whither should I flee, or whose interest should I depend upon with the Father, except to go to him, who is *the propitiation for our sins*; who also *sitteth at the right hand of God, making intercession for us?* (1 John ii. 2.) this therefore is my mediator with thee, heavenly Father; this my

perfect high-priest, who *needs not* to be sanctified *with other blood*, but hath made atonement, and stands before thee, pure and bright, in virtue of his own blood, with which he was washed for our sakes. (Heb. vii. 25. 27. ix. 11, 12.) This is that holy and unblemished, that acceptable and perfect sacrifice, offered for a sweet-smelling savour unto God. This that *Lamb without spot, who was dumb before his shearers*; and though reviled, and buffeted, and spit upon, yet *he opened not his mouth*. (Isa. liii. 7. 1 Pet. ii. 23, 24.) This that righteous person, who did not sin, but condescended to *bear our sins*, and by his own stripes to heal our putrified sores.

CHAP. VI.

The Son's sufferings represented to the Father.

LOOK, therefore, gracious Father, look upon this best and dearest of sons, who hath endured the worst and wickedest indignities upon my account. Consider, most merciful King of heaven, who it is that suffered; and at the same time think for whom he suffered such bitter things. Is not this, my God, that spotless innocent, whom, though thy Son, thou wert pleased not to spare, that he might redeem thy servant? Is not this that author and giver of life, who was led as *a sheep to the slaughter*, and becoming *obedient even unto death*, was content to die in the most painful and ignominious manner? (Rom. viii. 32. Gal. iii. 13. Isa. liii. 7. Acts viii. 32. Phil. ii. 8.) O thou, whose wonderful wisdom contrived the whole mystery of man's redemption! reflect, I beseech thee, that this is that very person, who though begotten of, and resembling thee, in thy almighty power, yet was ordained by thee to partake of my weakness. It was thy own Divine, which

clothed itself with my human nature, and in my flesh ascended the cross, and felt the torments of a most dolorous death. O let this unspeakable instance of condescension and love be ever before thine eyes! See that delightful Son extended on the cross; behold his holy hand stained with innocent blood, and pardon those iniquities which my wicked hands have been polluted with. Behold his naked side pierced with a cruel spear, and wash me in that fountain, which by the eyes of faith I see flowing from that wound. Behold those blessed feet, which never *stood in the way of sinners*, but *walked in the paths of thy commandments*, thrust through with merciless nails; and *hold up my goings in thy paths*, and give me grace to hate all evil ways, and to chuse the way to truth and righteousness. (Ps. i. 1. xvii. 5.) I beseech thee, O King of saints, may it please thee, by this most holy of all thy saints, by this powerful Redeemer, so to dispose my heart and actions, that I may be united to him in the same spirit, who did not disdain to be united to me in the same flesh. (1 Cor. vi. 17.) Observe that head reclined upon his breast, and expiring in the pangs of death; and let this proof of thy uncreated Son's humanity, prevail with my most merciful Creator, for compassion upon his own wretched creature's infirmity.

See his pale breast, his purple sides, his bowels parched with thirst, his beautiful eyes languishing in death, his arms grown stiff, his royal face besmeared, his legs extended, his pierced feet drenched with streams of precious blood: look, glorious Father of this dearest child, look upon this body, bruised and broken, and torn, and then in mercy call to mind whereof I am made. Let the punishment of God and man, personally united, atone for a man created after his and thy likeness. Let the sufferings of the Redeemer be ever in thy sight, and in them overlook the offences of thy

redeemed. This, my God, is he, whom thou thoughtest fit to *smite for the transgression of thy people*, though he was that *Beloved in whom thy soul delighted*; *this is he in whom there was no guile*, though *he was content to be reckoned among the transgressors*. (Isa. liii. 8. Matt. iii. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 22. Is. liii. 12. Luke xxii. 37.)

CHAP. VII.

An Acknowledgment that sinful Man was the Cause of Christ's Sufferings.

WHAT hadst thou done, O charming innocence, to bring thee as a criminal before thy enemies bar? Or how hadst thou deserved to be treated with such rude and insolent, such unrelenting and triumphant barbarity? What passage of thy whole life could they fix an accusation upon, what crime allege to countenance so rigorous a sentence? If none, (as none they could) whence then thy shameful bitter death, or how camest thou to be condemned as a vile miscreant? It was I, alas! it was wretched I, that gave thee all those pains: it was I deserved the death that thou enduredst; and my offences gave those scourges, those nails, that spear, the power of slaying and wounding, and killing thee. O wonderful process! mystery of justice! that the wicked should offend, and the righteous be punished for it! that the guilt and the condemnation should thus be separated! that the servant should contract a debt, and the Lord, to whom it was due, make satisfaction! that man should provoke the Divine vengeance, and God should feel the smart of it! How low, O Son of God, did thy humility stoop! How fervent was thy love! How boundless thy compassion!

For I have done wickedly, and thou art called

to account for it : I armed an angry justice against myself, and it is discharged upon thy head : mine is the crime, and thine the torture : I have been proud, and thou art humbled ; I am puffed up, and thou hast emptied thyself : I have been rebellious, and thy obedience hath expiated for it. I have been intemperate, and thou hast hungered and thirsted for it : my ungoverned appetite sinned in the forbidden, and thy immense love submitted to hang on the accursed, tree : I eat the fruit, and thou feelest the pains : I wallow in pleasures, and thou art torn with nails : the honey in my mouth is turned to gall in thy stomach : the tempting *Eve* rejoices with me, the sorrowful *Mary* suffers and laments with thee. Thus is my wickedness and want of love to God, thus is thy righteousness and inexpressible love to man, manifested in this marvellous dispensation.

And now, my God and King, *what reward shall I give*, what return can I make *for all the benefits thou hast done unto me* ? (Ps. cxvi. 12.) Surely it is not in the power of man to find out any requital answerable to such bounty : for how should the narrowness of a finite mind, extend to any thing fit to be compared with infinite compassion ? How should a poor creature be capable of any recompense suitable to the mercy of an almighty Creator ? And yet, my dearest Saviour, so wonderfully is this matter ordered, that even man, even I, weak and worthless though I be, may find something which thou art pleased to accept in return ; if by thy grace my soul be broken and humbled, and *I crucify this flesh with its affections and lusts*. (Gal. v. 24.) When wrought up to this holy disposition, I then begin to suffer for, and live to, thee ; and in some sort to pay back what thou hast endured when dying for me. Thus by gaining a conquest upon the inward man, I am by thee enabled to win the crown by my outward ; and, by

triumphing over the flesh in spiritual trials, that very flesh hath the courage to submit gladly for thy sake to bodily persecutions and death. This is the utmost my condition will admit; and this, though but little in itself, yet when proceeding from the same principle of holy love, thou art graciously pleased to accept, as the utmost poor mortals can do in acknowledgment of their great Maker. This is the cure of sinful souls; this, blessed Jesus, the sovereign antidote thy mercy hath provided for us!

I beseech thee, therefore, by *thy tender mercies, which have ever been of old*, pour such balm into my wounds, as may dispel the venom of my diseases, and restore me to spiritual health and soundness. (Ps. xxv. 6.) Let me drink of thy heavenly sweetness, and be so ravished with the taste, as ever after to disrelish the sensual delights of the world, to despise its pleasures, and cheerfully encounter the afflictions of this present life; and so to fix my heart on true noble joys, as always to disdain the empty and transitory shadows, which flesh and blood is so foolishly fond of, and so fearful of parting with.

Let me not, I beseech thee, esteem or delight in any thing but thee: let all this whole world can give, without thee, be counted no better than dross and dung: let me hate most irreconcilably whatever displeases thee; and what thou lovest let me most eagerly desire, and incessantly pursue: let me feel no satisfaction in any joys without thee; nor any reluctance in the greatest sufferings for thee. Let the mention of thy name, be always a refreshment, and the remembrance of thy goodness an inexhaustible spring of comfort to my soul. Let tears be my meat day and night, so I may attain to thy righteousness; and *the law of thy mouth always dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver*. (Ps. cxix. 72.) Let me aim at nothing

so much as to do thee service ; nor detest and avoid any thing in comparison of sinning against thee. And, for what I have unhappily done of that kind already, I entreat thee, my only refuge and hope, to pardon for thy own mercies sake. Let my ears be ever open to the voice of thy law, and suffer not my *heart to incline to any evil thing*, that I never comply with *them that practise wickedness*, nor take shelter in trifling pretences to excuse or indulge myself in doing what I ought not. (Ps. cxli. 4.) And once more, I beg thee, by thy own unparalleled humility, that *the foot of pride may not come against me, nor the hand of the ungodly cast me down*. (Ps. xxxvi. 11.)

CHAP. VIII.

The Soul's Application of Christ's Death and Sufferings to herself by Faith.

THOU seest, my Lord, my God, I have done my utmost to incline thy mercy ; I have with a most sincere zeal offered to thee the best, the dearest, the most acceptable thing I have : nay, I have nothing else, indeed, no addition to make, since in this one I place my whole trust, and make a present at once of all I value or depend upon. For I have addressed to thee by my only advocate, and thy only Son : that *one mediator between God and man*, that glorious intercessor, by whom I assuredly expect acceptance and forgiveness. (1 Tim. ii. 5.) I have, by my words poured out before thee, sent that *Word* in my behalf to thee, which thou didst heretofore send down from heaven for my sins ; I have paid down the price of that passion, which thy own Son, I most firmly believe, hath undergone, for the release of that debt to thy justice which my misdeeds have contracted. I believe that thy Godhead, sent thus

into the world, did take upon him my manhood; that in this state he vouchsafed to be bound and buffeted, to be derided and spitted upon, to be nailed, and pierced, and crucified. And this nature of mine, after being wrapt up in swaddling clothes, and moistened with infant tears; after the toils of youth, the mortifications of fastings, and watchings, and long journeys; after being furrowed with scourgings, torn upon the cross, numbered among the dead, and at last honoured with a glorious resurrection: this nature of mine, I say, thy Godhead united to it, I most assuredly believe, hath now exalted to the joys of heaven, and seated at the right-hand of thy Majesty on high. This is my confidence; this the reconciliation for my sins; this the atonement thou hast accepted for them.

Remember then, in much mercy, the quality of thy Son, and the condition of thy servant redeemed by him. Look upon the Maker, and despise not the work of his hands. Take the shepherd into thy embraces, and cast not out the stray sheep, which he brings home upon his shoulders. (Luke xv.) For this is that careful shepherd, who, when his sheep wandered over steep hills, and thorny vales, and desolate wildernesses, sought and brought it back with wondrous skill and pains: and when it was faint and just expiring, sustained and carried it, tied it fast to himself by the strictest bands of love, lifted it out of the pit of error and confusion, and with many a kind and tender embrace rejoiced over it, and fetched the poor lost silly creature home to the *ninety and nine* which lay safe in his own fold.

See then, my God and King, see the good shepherd bringing to thee the sheep committed to his charge: he undertook to save man by thy appointment and he hath performed the undertaking so, as to restore to thee pure and spotless thy once

polluted creatures : he brings in safety back that prey, which the wolf and robber had carried off by violence. He brings that servant into thy presence, whom his own guilty conscience had put upon fleeing from thy sight, that so the punishment due to his deserts might be remitted through his Lord's satisfaction ; and the offender, who had nothing to look for but to be banished for ever into hell, might, under the protection of this glorious conqueror, be assured of admittance into his heavenly country. I needed none to help me in offending thee, but without help I never could have appeased thee. Thou, therefore, who alone couldst be, thou my God was my helper ; and thy beloved Son effected what could not have been effected, had he not taken my nature upon him, in order to cure my infirmities : but thus he became our perfect cure, by rendering the same nature the subject of both the sin and the sacrifice, and drawing the antidote out of the same root from whence the poison had sprung. Thus hath he made me a fit object of mercy ; while sitting at thy right hand in my substance, he makes it impossible for thee to hate that in me, which thou canst not but love in him. This is my hope, and the joy of my confidence.

If then I do, as well I may, seem vile and despicable in thy sight, through my own impurities, yet look upon me at least with an eye of pity ; when thou beholdest my likeness in the Son of thy love, behold the mystery of a human body in him, and remit the guilt of the same human body in me : hide my sins in his wounds, and let my stains be washed in his most precious blood. Flesh provoked thee to wrath, let flesh likewise prevail with thee for mercy : and as my flesh drew me into sin, so let my Saviour's draw thee to compassion. Great I confess are my faults, and the punishments due to them ; but greater,

infinitely greater, are the merits and sufferings of my dear Redeemer: between my sins and his righteousness there is no comparison, no proportion at all, either for quality or degree, no more than there is between God and man, between an atom and an infinite.

For what is it possible for man to be guilty of which the Son of God made man ~~man~~ not needs have compensated? What pride can be so extravagant, that his humility did not exceed and make amends for? What dominion could death have so absolute, that the death of the cross should not utterly overthrow it? If then Almighty God would be pleased to weigh the sins of man in a balance against the goodness of his Saviour, east and west, heaven and hell, are not so far distant from each other. And therefore, O my God, let my manifold offences be pardoned, for the many more pains and sufferings of thy dear Son: let his piety atone for my want of it, his ready obedience for my perverseness, his meekness for my untractable temper: set his humility against my pride, his patience against my discontent, his kindness against my hard-heartedness, the calmness of his soul against my fretfulness and unruly passions, his gentleuess against my rage, his universal and unwearied love against my hatred, revenge, and cruelty.

CHAP. IX.

A Prayer to the Holy Ghost.

AND now, O Holy Spirit, love of God, who proceedest from the Almighty Father and his most blessed Son, powerful advocate, and sweetest comforter, infuse thy grace, and descend plentifully into my heart; enlighten the dark corners of this neglected dwelling, and scatter

there thy cheerful beams ! dwell in that soul which longs to be thy temple ; water that barren soil, over-run with weeds and briars, and lost for want of cultivating, and make it fruitful with thy dew from heaven. Heal the lurking distempers of my inward man ; strike me through with the dart of thy love, and kindle holy fires in my breast, such as ~~may~~ *flame* out in a bright and devout zeal, actuate and enliven the heavy mass, burn up all the dross of sensual affections, and, diffusing themselves through every part, possess and purify, and warm my whole spirit, and soul and body.

Make me to drink of the spiritual pleasures as out of a river ; (Psal. xxxvi. 8.) and let their heavenly sweetness so correct my palate, as to leave no desire, no relish for the gross unhealthful fulsomeness of worldly delights. (Psal. xliii. 1. cxli. 10.) *Judge me, O Lord, and defend my cause against the ungodly people. Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth thee, for thou art my God.* I believe, that in whomsoever thou dwellest, the Father and the Son do likewise come, and inhabit that breast. And, oh ! happy is that breast, which is honoured with so glorious, so divine a guest, in whose company the Father and the Son always come, and take up their abode ! O that it may please thee to come to me, thou kindest comforter of mourning souls, thou mighty defence in distresses, and ready help in time of need. O come thou purger of all inward pollutions, and healer of spiritual wounds and diseases. Come, thou strength of the feeble, and raiser of them that fall. (Luke i. 52.) Come, thou putter down of the proud, and teacher of the meek and humble. Come, thou father of the fatherless, and just avenger of desolate widows. (Psal. xxv. 9. lxxviii. 5.) Come, come, thou hope of the poor, and refreshment of them that languish and faint. Come, thou star and guide of them that sail in this

tempestuous sea of the world; thou only haven of the tossed and shipwrecked. Come, thou glory and crown of the living, and only safeguard of the dying. Come, Holy Spirit, in much mercy, come, make me fit to receive thee, and condescend to my infirmities, that my meanness may not be disdained by thy greatness, nor my weakness by thy strength: all which I beg for the sake of Jesus Christ, my only Saviour, who in the unity of thee, O Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth with the Father, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

CHAP. X.

An Act of Humility,

I KNOW, O Lord, and do with all humility acknowledge myself an object altogether unworthy of thy love; but, sure I am, thou art an object altogether worthy of mine. I am not good enough to serve thee, but thou hast a right to the best service I can pay. Do thou then impart to me some of that excellence, and that shall supply my own want of worth. Help me to cease from sin according to thy will, that I may be capable of doing thee service according to my duty. Enable me so to guard and govern myself, so to begin and finish my course, that when the race of life is run, I may sleep in peace, and rest in thee. Be with me unto the end, that my sleep may be rest indeed, my rest perfect security, and that security a blessed eternity. *Amen.*

CHAP. XI.

A Prayer to the Holy Trinity.

WE praise, and bless, and acknowledge thee both in heart and voice; even thee, O Father, begotten of none; thee, O Son, the only

begotten of the Father; thee, O Holy Ghost, eternal comforter: to this holy and undivided trinity, be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. XII.

A Confession of God's Omnipotence and Majesty.

O GOD most high, three persons, but one essence, the same majesty and power, Lord God Almighty! the least of all thy servants, and meanest member of thy mystical body, the church, desires to ascribe to thee all honour and praise, the utmost that the little knowledge and power, with which thou hast been pleased to endue him, is capable of. I have no present but myself to make, and that which is not in itself worthy thy acceptance, I beg thou wilt be pleased to look upon, not according to its own value, but according to thy own rich mercy, and that sincerity and faith unfeigned, with which I do most joyfully consecrate it to thy service.

I believe in, and heartily pray to thee, great King of heaven and earth; I acknowledge Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; three persons, but one essence; the true, the Almighty God, of one uncompounded, incorporeal, invisible, uncircumscribed being; in whom there is nothing higher or lower, greater or less, but perfect and equal all: great without quantity, good without quality, eternal without time, life without death, strength without weakness, truth without falsehood, omnipresent without space, filling all things and places without extension, passing every where without motion, abiding every where without confinement, communicating to all thy creatures without diminishing thy own fulness, governing all things without labour; without beginning, and

yet giving beginning to all, making all things mutable, and yet unchangeable thyself; infinite in greatness, unbounded in power, of goodness indefectible, of wisdom incomprehensible, wonderful in thy counsels, just in thy judgments, unsearchable in thy thoughts, true in all thy words, holy in all thy works, abundant in mercies, long-suffering towards sinners, compassionate to all that repent; always the same, without mixture or defilement, alloy or accidents; eternal, immortal, unchangeable. Thy will alters not, thy justice is not biassed, thy mind is not disturbed with griefs, or pleasures, or passions: with thee nothing is forgotten, nothing which was once lost called to remembrance again; but all things past or future are ever present to thy capacious mind: whose duration neither begun in time, nor increases by length of time, nor shall it ever end, but thou livest before, and in, and after all ages. Thy glory is eternal, thy power supreme, thy kingdom everlasting, and world without end. *Amen.*

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Incarnation of the Divine Word.

THUS far, O my God, the searcher and seer of hearts, I have professed my faith in thy power and majesty. (Rom. x. 9.) Now as my heart believes unto righteousness, so my mouth shall confess unto salvation, that unspeakable goodness exprest to mankind in the latter ages of the world. Thou, O Father, art the only person, of whom we no where read that he was sent. But of thy Son, the apostle hath instructed us, that, *When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son.* (Gal. iv. 4.) By saying *God sent him*, he means that the person thus sent came ~~into~~

the world when he condescended to be born of the virgin *Mary*, and made his appearance in our flesh a true and perfect man.

But what means that passage of the great evangelist, *He was in the world, and the world was made by him?* (John i. 10.) the sense sure is, that he was sent hither with regard to his humanity, but was really here before, and all along in respect of his divinity. Now this mission I believe, and thankfully acknowledge to have been the work of the whole trinity. But, O holy Father, how great was thy love, and how tender the almighty Creator's concern for his poor creatures, which *spared not his own Son*, but *delivered him up freely for us*, and which is the most astonishing circumstance for us, *while we were yet sinners!* (Rom. viii. 32. v. 8. Phil. ii. 8. Col. ii. 14.) That Son became *obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, he took the hand-writing that was against us, and nailed it to that cross of his*; thus crucifying sin and slaying death. He only was free when in the regions of death and captivity, because he only had *power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again*, for us. (John x. 18.)

He therefore was the victor and the victim, and therefore the victor, because the victim. He was the priest and the sacrifice, and for that reason the true High-Priest, because the true sacrifice to thee our God. Firm therefore are those hopes I entertain of having all my diseases healed by him, because grounded upon his *sitting at thy right hand, and living for ever to make intercession for us*. (Heb. vii. 25.) Those diseases, I must own, are many and sore, for the prince of this world hath much in me; but I apply to thee for health, by the merits of that Redeemer, in whom his malice could find nothing. Justify me by him,

who did no sin, neither was any guile found in his mouth. (John xiv. 30. 1 Pet. ii. 22.) By that holy and spotless head convey health and salvation to thy weak polluted member. Deliver me, I beseech thee, from my sinful habits, my vicious dispositions, my faults of wilfulness, of negligence and ignorance. Fill me with thy grace, and help me to excel and resemble thee, the perfection of goodness. Keep me stedfast in the way of thy commandments, and enable me to grow and persevere in virtue unto the end, that I may live and die according to thy *will*.

CHAP. XIV.

*An Act of Trust in, and Thanksgiving for,
Christ and his Sufferings.*

WHAT foundation could a sinful creature, laden with guilt, and quite overwhelmed with frailties, have for hope? (Heb. x. 27. John i. 14.) What could poor I, whose conscience upbraids me with infinite faults and neglects, have looked for but *judgment and fiery indignation*, had not thy Word, O God, *been made flesh, and dwelt among us*? But this marvellous dispensation will no more suffer me to despair, than my own condition, without it, could have justified my hope: for who shall dare to despair when we, even *while we were enemies, were reconciled by the death of thy Son*; and, therefore, without all question, *being reconciled, shall much more be saved by his life*? (Rom. v. 10.) This is my hope, the rock of my confidence, even the precious blood of thy Son, which he shed for us, and for our salvation. In him I revive, and take courage to approach thee, *not having my own righteousness*, or presuming in any degree upon any work of *mine*, but that *righteousness which is of thy Son, our Lord*

Jesus Christ, even the righteousness of faith in his sacrifice for me. (Phil. iii. 9.)

For this I give thee my most unfeigned thanks, O tender lover of souls, who by thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, hast created us again to a new life when we had made ourselves nothing, worse than nothing; and wonderfully delivered and restored us to a spiritual being, when we were sunk and absolutely lost in sin and misery.

All praise be to thy fatherly compassion, which from the bottom of my heart I admire and thankfully adore, for that inexpressible love wherewith thy bowels yearned over undone man, whereby thou didst extend to most unworthy wretches such marvellous grace, didst send thy only begotten out of thy own bosom, for our universal benefit, and save poor sinners, then the children of wrath and perdition.

All honour and praise be to thee for his miraculous incarnation and holy nativity, whereby he took flesh of the substance of his blessed mother, for us, and for our salvation, that as he had been before from all eternity very God of God, so he might be in time very man of man.

Glory and praise be to my God for his passion and painful crucifixion, for his death and resurrection, for his triumphant ascent into heaven, and the session of our nature at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Acts i.) For on the fortieth day after his rising from the dead, he went up in the sight of his disciples far above all heavens, and from this throne did, according to his most true promise, shower down the Holy Spirit most plentifully upon the sons of adoption.

All honour and thanksgiving be unto thee, O Father for ever, for that shedding of his most precious blood, whereby we are redeemed; and for the sweet pledges and lively memorials of that love, the holy and life-giving sacrament of his body

and blood, whereby the members of thy church are supplied with daily food from heaven, washed and sanctified from their sins, and admitted to be partakers of the Divine nature.

Blessed, for ever blessed be that astonishing and unspeakable goodness, which so tenderly loved wretches so unworthy of thy love, and saved a perishing world by thy only, thy best-loved Son. For no instance of thy mercy can compare with this; no expression of it can be carried higher, than that thou shouldst so *love the world as to give thy only begotten Son, that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:* (John iii. 16, 17. 3.) And *this is life everlasting, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast loved; to know thee by a right faith, and to manifest that knowledge by works* suitable to such a faith.

CHAP. XV.

Of God the Father's Love to Mankind.

O BOWELS unmeasurable! O love inestimable! thou deliverest up a Son to ransom a servant; an only, an entirely beloved Son, for a wicked and rebellious servant. God was made man, that undone man might be rescued from the tyranny and power of devils. How infinitely kind was thy Son our Lord, how tender of souls, whose pity was content to stoop so low for our salvation, so low, as not only to take our nature of his virgin mother, but in it to shed the blood he took, and endure the scandal and torture of the cross! Behold the merciful and gracious God, coming in grace and mercy, infinite from his own Divine essence, and such as no being but God, who is love and goodness itself, could be capable of; coming *to seek and to save that which*

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(Luke xv. 4, 5, 6. Mat. xviii. 11, 12, 13.)

Should the careful shepherd looking for his stray sheep, searching till he find it, and when he hath found it, carrying it back to the fold upon his shoulders with most affectionate joy.

O the love! O the mercy! Was ever anything like this heard of? Who can without amazement think of bowels so enlarged? Who can forbear admiring, adoring, exulting with transports of joy, at the infinite goodness of thee, my God, and the love wherewith thou lovedst us? (Rom. viii. 3.) *Thou sentest thy own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin didst condemn sin, that we might be made thy righteousness in him.* (2 Cor. v. 21.) For "this is the very paschal Lamb without blemish and without spot, who by his death hath destroyed death, and by his rising to life again, hath restored to us everlasting life."

But what, alas! are we able to repay thee for such wonderful benefits, such astonishing demonstrations of thy concern for us? What praises, what thanksgivings are sufficient? Though thou shouldst impart to us all the knowledge and wisdom, all the activity and power of angels which wait continually about thy throne, and execute all thy pleasure, yet could we not be qualified for any action worthy so vast a favour: though every limb were a tongue, yet could we not even thus sound forth thy praises as they deserve: for even angels themselves are too weak to comprehend the depth and glories of this mystery, infinite as thyself, and therefore such as could only be effected, such as can perfectly be known, by thy own knowledge only, infinite as thy own goodness. How have we deserved, that thy Son, and our God should *take upon him not the nature of angels, but should take the seed of Abraham*; that he should become like us mortals in all things, *sin only excepted*; (Heb. ii. 16.) that he should honour this

mortality with the glories of his resurrection, with a crown of immortality; that he should exalt it far above all heavens, above all the troops of angels, above cherubim and seraphim, and place it at thy own right hand; that angels should praise, that dominions should adore, that all the powers of heaven should fall down, and humble themselves before, and cast their crowns at the feet of this man and God in one person, seated in dignity so far above them all!

This exaltation is my joyful hope; this my firm and only confidence: for even that Jesus, in that glorious Lord, is a part of every one of us; *We are of his flesh, his blood, and his bones.* (Eph. v. 30.) Now where a part of me already reigns there I believe myself shall reign also; and in the triumphs and glories of his flesh, I plainly see and am assured of the honours done to my own. Though I am a miserable sinner, yet the participation of this grace will not suffer me to despond: and, if my own vileness exclude me from this bliss, yet my substance, already admitted to it, opens a passage for me thither too. For God is not, cannot be, so unnatural, as to forget that manhood, with which himself is clothed, which he put on for my sake, and which he will one day receive to himself for my unspeakable benefit.

No, no, our God is merciful and gracious, tender-hearted, and of great goodness. He loves his own flesh, his own body, and his own bowels. That flesh of ours, in which he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and now does sit in heavenly places, cannot but love us, because this in effect is but to love itself: we have the privilege of our own blood flowing in his veins: we are his body, and his substance. He is our head, from whence the members are derived, ~~to~~ which they are inseparably united; and of ~~us~~ ~~is~~ that ordinance of God in the first creation ~~we~~

rified, that *He is the bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and we two are no more two, but one flesh.* (Gen. ii. 23. Matt. xix. 6.) Now the apostle tells us, and if he had not, even nature itself tells us, that *no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but loveth and cherisheth it.* (Ephes. v. 29, 30, 31, 32.) And this principle of nature he hath justified the application of to our own eternal comfort, and most assured hope, when he adds those most precious words: *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Two Natures in Christ.

FOR this cause, O Lord my God, my tongue, my heart, my every faculty, shall never cease to magnify thy infinite loving-kindness for all the miracles of mercy which thou hast been pleased to work for the relief of wretched man, by the ministry and mediation of thy blessed Son, the great restorer of thy lost world. That Son, *who died for our offences, and rose again for our justification; and now liveth for ever at thy right hand, making intercession continually for us:* (Rom. iv. 25.) that Son, who joins with thee in extending the mercy for which he intercedes, because he is of thee, and with thee, the same very and eternal God, which makes him *able for ever to save them, that come to thee by him:* (Heb. vii. 25. Matt. xxviii. 18. Phil. ii. 10, 11.) that Son, who even as man, though in that respect inferior to thy Divine majesty, hath *all power given to him in heaven and in earth; that, at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to, and in thy glory, O God the Father. This is he*

whom thou hast ordained to be the judge both of the quick and the dead; for, thou thyself judgest no man, but hast committed all judgment to thy Son, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Acts x. 42; John v. 22; Col. ii. 3.)

Now he is both the witness and the judge; that judge, and that witness, whose discerning eye no guilty conscience can escape: (Heb. iv. 12.) *For all things are naked and open in his sight.* Thus he, who did himself submit to a most unrighteous judgment, *shall judge the world in righteousness, and the people with equity.* (Acts xvii. 31; Ps. xcvi. 9.) I magnify thy holy name, O Almighty and most merciful God, and from the bottom of my heart give glory to thee, for this wonderful conjunction of the Divine and human nature in one person, that so one might not be God, and another be man; but that one and the same should be God and man, man and God. But notwithstanding thy Divine *Word*, did, by a most astonishing condescension, suffer himself to be *made flesh*, yet both these natures still remained distinct and perfect, and neither were changed into, or swallowed up in the other. (John i. 14.) There was no addition of a fourth person to the trinity by this amazing dispensation; no confusion of substance, but an exact unity so ordered by thy excellent wisdom, that the substance taken anew should approach, and be joined to God; and that of which it could never be said that it was not, should still continue what it always was.

O marvellous mystery! O inexplicable conjunction! O mercy most adorable, ever to be admired, ever to be loved! We were not worthy to be called thy servants, and thou hast made us sons; *sons of God*, not only *sons*, but *heirs too, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* (Rom. viii. 17.) Whence is this mighty favour? Who

are we, that the King of heaven should thus delight to honour us? Nothing, alas! and even less than nothing. But since, O gracious Father, thou hast been pleased to do great things for us, I beseech thee, by thy own unspeakable love, to perfect the good work thou hast begun; and make us such, as thy many and gracious promises in Jesus Christ were designed to be accomplished in. Send down thy grace and spirit from above, and let this qualify us to receive the fulness of thy mercy. Help us to understand and consider with reverence, to contemplate, and with all diligence to walk worthy of this *mystery of godliness*, this Son of God, *manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.* (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Thanks due to God for the Redemption of the World.

HOW vainly are we indebted to thy bounty, O Lord, whom thou hast redeemed with so precious a ransom, saved with so noble a gift, honoured with so high a privilege! What fear, what reverence, what love, what thanks, what praise, and glory, ought wretched sinners to pay to a God, who hath thus pitied, thus loved, thus rescued, thus sanctified, thus exalted them! The whole of our ability, the whole of our knowledge, our very life and being is all of it thy just tribute. But, alas! what ability hath any of us, what can we do, or what indeed are we, which is not thine already? Thou, therefore, from whom all good things do come, impart to us, for thy own name's sake, of thy good treasure, that of thy own good gifts we may give back again to thee;

and by thy grace be enabled to serve and please thee in faithfulness and truth, and to render thee due and daily praise for all thy works of mercy, yea, even for the very power of rendering thee this praise.

For, alas! we are very sensible that the very power of serving and pleasing thee is entirely thy gift; since *every good gift and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* (Jam. i. 17.) And in this sense we address to thee, O Father almighty, acknowledging thy power; O Father of mercy, depending on thy goodness; O Lord incomprehensible, adoring thy infinite excellences; O maker and restorer of all things by thy Son, Jesus Christ, in confidence of thy love through that sweetest Saviour, whom thou hast vouchsafed to send out of thy own bosom for our common benefit; to take our life, that he might give us his; to be perfect man, of the substance of his mother, as he is perfect God of the substance of thee, his Father; perfect God and perfect man, but still one Christ, begotten from eternity, and born in time, immortal and mortal, creator and creature, strong and weak, victor and vanquished, the nourisher and the nourished, the shepherd and the sheep, dead for a season, and yet ever living with thee: in the name therefore of this wonderful person we approach thee; and well we may, since he who cannot lie hath left this joyful assurance with all that love him, *That whatsoever such shall ask the Father in his name, he will not fail to give it them.* (John xvi. 23.)

Therefore by this great, this true, this only perfect high-priest, this bishop of souls, who offered himself a spotless and propitiatory sacrifice to thy justice; by *this good shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep*; (Heb. ix. 14; John x. 11.)

by this Mediator and Redeemer, who *sitteth at thy right hand, making intercession for us*, I implore thy mercy, O most tender lover of mankind, that thou, this Son of thine, and thy blessed Spirit, would grant me grace worthily and constantly to magnify thy glorious name, with deep remorse and godly sorrow for my sins, with humility and plenty of tears; with profound reverence, with fear and trembling. And for this I entreat the whole trinity of persons, who being all united in the same substance, must of necessity be joined in the same act of giving.

But being sadly sensible withal, that the spirit within me, how willing soever of itself, is yet weakened and weighed down by this corruptible body, I beg that thou wouldst stir up and quicken my stupidity; (Wisd. ix. 15.) and so actuate this heavy lump, that I may vigorously attend to, and stedfastly persevere in, the ways of thy commandments, and the proper methods of giving thee true praise day and night. (Ps. xxxix. 3.) *O let my spirit wax hot within me, and in my musings let the holy fire burst out.* And in regard thy own Son hath declared, that *no man cometh unto him except he be drawn of the Father*; (John vi. 44.) and again, that *no man cometh to the Father but by him*; (John xiv. 6.) draw me, I most humbly pray thee, continually to him, that he at last may bring me to *thee*; even to those happy mansions, where he now sits at thy right hand; where there is life and bliss everlasting; where joyful love abounds, and fear is done away; where there is eternal day, and perfect agreement of souls; certain security, and secure quiet; pleasure and exquisite happiness; happy eternity, and eternal blessedness, even the ravishing sight, and the never-ceasing praise of thee the great and glorious God: where thou, with that blessed Son, as does that blessed Son with thee, livest

and reignest in the unity of the same Divine Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

CHAP. XVIII.

A devout Prayer to Christ.

MY hope, my Christ, my God, Saviour and lover of men, thou light and way, thou life and health, thou glory and grace of all that love and serve thee! Look down from the throne of thy majesty, and in the midst of bliss remember the injuries and sufferings, the scourges, and the cross, the wounds and death which thou endurest—and think with favour on thy suppliant, for whose sake thou wast pleased to endure and do so much.

Thou art my living and true God; my holy father, my gentle and kind master, my great king, my good shepherd, my only teacher, my most ready and effectual helper, my dearest and most beautiful spouse, my true and living bread, my everlasting high-priest, my guide to my own country, my true light, my right way, my best wisdom, my holy delight, my unspotted purity, my reconciliation and peace, my sure defence; my most desirable portion; my eternal health; my unbounded mercy; my invincible patience; my unblemished sacrifice; my perfect redemption; my assured hope; my universal charity; my resurrection from the dead; my everlasting life; my joy and beatific vision for ever. Of thee I beg that I may walk by thee, come to thee, *rest* in thee, O thou *way, thou truth, thou life, without which no man cometh to the Father.* (John xiv. 6.) Thou, even thou, art the blessing my soul ~~wants~~ and most earnestly desires, my sweetest, ~~loved~~ only Lord.

O brightness of thy Father's glory, ~~which~~

thy throne far above the cherubim seest all the secrets of the great deep ! Thou true, enlivening, unexhausted light, which angels long to be illuminated with, and spend glad ages in beholding ! spring forth into my soul, and scatter the thick darkness there, that the brightness of thy love may shine and shed itself through every corner of my benighted heart. Give me thyself, O God, give me thy love in return, for that I love thee thou knowest ; and if it be too little, I desire to love thee more ardently. I cannot make such exact reckoning of my love, as to know how much I fall short of that affection which I ought to have, that so my every action and desire might carry me to thy embraces, fly to thy arms, and never cease the pursuit of my Lord, till I be hid in the secret place of thy presence. But though I cannot take a precise measure of my defects, and how much better I ought to be, yet this I know, and from my own experience can declare, that all without, nay, all besides thee, avails me nothing ; all about, all within is desolation and misery ; whatever the foolish world calls plenty is nothing ; and all but my God is poverty, and the very extremity of want.

For thou alone art that God, which cannot admit of either diminution or increase ; to thee to live and to be happy is the same thing, who art happiness itself. But thy creature, with whom these things may be separated, and who may either not live or live and be unhappy, ought to ascribe the whole benefit of both life and happiness to thy sole gift and favour. Hence it is that we stand in continual need of thee, but thou hast none of us : for, if we had no being at all, that would not lessen in any degree that happiness, which is inseparable from thy being ! nay, is indeed thy very being. It is therefore absolutely necessary for us to cleave stedfastly to the Lord our God,

that by thy continual assistance we may be enabled to live *soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.* (Tit. ii. 12.) For this load of flesh and frailty cumpers and drags us down, but the gifts of thy spirit are a happy counterpoize to this heavy clog. By these we feel the sluggish mass warmed and put into motion; we rise and mount upwards in heart and mind; *we sing songs of degrees*, and, inflamed with thy Divine fire, burn with holy zeal and soar aloft successfully.

But whither is it that these flights would carry us? Even to the *Peace of Jerusalem*: According to that of the *psalmist*, *I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the Lord.* (Ps. cxxii. 1.) There hath his goodness prepared a place for us, that the sum of all our wishes and desires should be to set up our rest there for ever. (2 Cor. v. 6.) For, in regard we *are absent from the Lord*, during the time of our sojourning in this tabernacle of the body, *we have* (it is manifest) *no continuing city here, but are seeking one to come*; (Heb. xiii. 14.) we lodge in a movable tent, and are travellers and strangers in a foreign land; but we are free denizens of heaven, and our home and all our privileges and properties are there. (Phil. iii. 20.) I will therefore move under the conduct of thy grace; I will retire into the closet of my heart, and entertain my soul with songs of love to thee, my King and my God; with tender sighs and groanings which cannot be uttered; in the house of my pilgrimage, which the contemplation of thy righteousness shall soften, while it is made the subject of my joy and praise.

And can I think upon *Jerusalem* without stretching forward all the desires of my soul to that region of bliss? *Jerusalem*, the country, the common mother of us all? and thee, my God,

that reignest there in glory ; the light of that holy city, the father and defender, the governor and the shepherd ; the chaste, but exquisite delights that abound there ; the substantial joy, and all the unspeakable felicities united in thee, who art the true, the supreme, the only felicity of thy people. O let me not, I beseech thee, turn back, or go out of the way, but proceed continually in my affections, till thou at last bring my whole spirit, and soul, and body into the peaceful mansions, where my heart is already fixed. (Rom. viii. 23.) The first fruits of the Spirit I already taste, impart to me the whole lump, and satiate my soul with the joys which I now anticipate. Collect my scattered thoughts, and take off the blemishes and deformities of my present frailties, till thou hast wrought me up to a resemblance of thy beauty, and established me for ever in the glories of thy blessed presence, O God of my mercy,

CHAP. XIX.

The Souls of the Righteous are the House of God.

THIS house of thine, my God, is not built of earthly, nor of any such heavenly, but corporeal matter, as the orbs above are formed of ; but is spiritual and eternal, without flaw or decay. For thou hast *set it fast for ever and ever, and founded it upon a decree which shall not be broken.* (Ps. cxlviii. 6.) Thou hast given it a duration equal to thy own, and end it shall have none, though it had a beginning. (Ecc. xxiv. 1.) For *wisdom was created in the beginning* : not that essential Wisdom, co-eternal with the Father, *by whom all things were made,* (John i. 3.) but that which is created but spiritual substance, the rational and intellectual mind, which is light by

contemplation of light, and in a qualified sense styled wisdom, though it be finite and created. But as there is a mighty difference between original Light, and that which is derived from, and caused by the reflection of it; so is there between thee, the perfect uncreated Wisdom, and that which is thy creature, and thy image. Thus also we distinguish between the righteousness which justifies, (the righteousness of God) and that which is attributed to the persons justified by it; in which last sense, the apostle says, we are made *the righteousness of God*, in thee his Son, our Lord. (2 Cor. x. 21.)

The ground of which distinction lies in this; that the first of all these creatures was wisdom, that rational power, of which thy city consists, which is *above*; and *free*, the chaste *mother of us all* for ever in the heavens, even in that heaven of heavens which continually praises God, and is to him the heaven of heavens indeed. And though we can assign no point of time antecedent to this noble workmanship of thine, which had a being before time itself was: yet thou, the eternal Creator, art before it, and from thee it derives its eternity and its beginning. It is therefore of thee in such a manner, as to be a substance distinct from thee: it is qualified to behold thy face always, and never to be deprived of that blessed vision. In this respect it undergoes no change, and yet it is liable to change; for this light may grow dim and cold, if not fed and kept bright by the fire of fervent love, which, when well cherished, conveys into it a heat and lustre clearer and warmer than the noon-day sun.

By this most holy love it is so closely united to thee, the true, the eternal God, that though it be not of the same eternity from the beginning, yet no length of future time, no change of fortune or affairs, shall ever dissolve or loosen it; but it

shall rest and be employed for ever in the ravishing contemplation of thy Divine excellences. For thou, O God, are bountiful to all that love thee; and wilt reveal thyself to such as seek thee, in measures large as their capacities admit, or at least as their necessities require. This keeps thy servants steady to thee and to themselves. This preserves the soul in the same happy state, while its eyes are ever intent, its affections ever fixed upon thee; while it beholds and loves and delights in that God, who is true light and pure love. O blessed noble creature, the first and best of all the works of God! but then most blessed, when dwelling upon thy Master's blessed perfections; then happy beyond all expression, when entertaining that Divine inhabitant, and illustrated with the enlivening beams of that glorious Spring of Light from on high!

What can I suppose deserves that magnificent name, *The heaven of heavens*? What can be esteemed the highest and most beloved habitation of God, rather than this spiritual house; the purity and zeal of a mind *at unity in itself*, always transported with the pleasure of beholding the Divine glory; always enamoured with God, without admitting any rival and partner in its love. This is the rock on which blessed spirits are built! these the heavenly satisfactions in heavenly places; this the foretaste of future joys, and the assurance of every way-faring soul, that though it sojourn at present in a strange land, and at a great distance from thee, yet if it thirst and pant after thee, if its godly tears are its meat day and night, if the dwelling thus above hereafter all the days of its life be its constant wish and endeavour, its longing shall one day be satisfied with the pleasures of thy house, and all its pious mournings turned into joy. From this bliss then and duration of their own let our souls raise them-

selves, to form such ideas of thine as their present condition can receive : for what notions must we have of this blessedness, and how vast is thy eternity, when even this created house of thine, when keeping at home with thee, though it partake not of the same unbounded eternity, yet by its union with its glorious Maker and inhabitant stands proof against all chance of time ; and, persevering by thy gracious influences, is firm, notwithstanding the possibility of change which it is subject to ; secured by thy presence, and by its own constant affection, and those liberal communicacions of thy grace, which it drinks in, and feasts upon continually : it looks at nothing beyond thee, as a future addition to its happiness ; it is afflicted with no troublesome remembrances of any thing past, which should embitter or lessen the present, but is entirely blessed with the enjoyment of that God, who hath in mercy made it like himself, and knit it to himself with the strongest cement of inviolable love, and such a fulness of satisfaction, as neither suffers nor desires a change.

CHAP. XX.

The pious Soul's longing for Heaven.

LORD ! *how have I loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth !* O glorious seat ! the residence and the workmanship of the great, the mighty God : Let me continue, let me increase in this love of thee more and more. Let this weary pilgrimage be spent in advancing daily towards thee, and may the gasping of my soul after thee sanctify and comfort the labours of each day, and refresh my waking thoughts by night. Let *my heart* be al-

ways where *my treasure is* already. (Mat. vi. 20.) And, in this dry and desolate wilderness, may I feel no other trust than that of arriving at my heavenly *Canaan*, and partaking in the society and the joys of that happy *people, who have the Lord for their God*. (Ps. cxliv. 15.) O may that God who made both me and thee possess me in thee ! Not that I dare presume to hope for thy beauty and bliss upon the account of any deserts of my own ; but yet, the humblest sense of my own unworthiness will not sink me into despair of it, when I reflect upon the blood of him who died to purchase this mansion for me. Let but his merits be applied to me ; let his intercessions assist my want of worth, and then I am safe ; for those merits cannot be overbalanced by my sins, nor were, or can those prayers be ever offered up to God in vain.

For my own part, I confess with shame and sorrow, that *I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost*, drawn out my wanderings and my miseries to a great length, (Ps. cxix. 176.) and am cast out of the sight of my God into the blindness and darkness of a spiritual banishment. In this forlorn estate I sadly bewail the wretchedness of my captivity, and sing mournful songs when I remember thee, *O Jerusalem*. As yet I am at an uncomfortable distance, and at best my feet stand only in the outer courts of *Sion*. The beauties of the sanctuary are behind the veil, and kept hid from my longing eyes : but I am full of hope, that the builder of this sanctuary, and the gracious shepherd of souls, will carry me in upon his shoulders, that I may there rejoice with that gladness unspeakable, which all those happy saints feel, who are already admitted into the presence of their God and Saviour : the Saviour who hath opened this royal palace to all believers, by *abolishing the enmity in his flesh, and reconciling all*

things in heaven and earth by his own blood. (Eph. ii. 14, 15, 16 ; Col. i. 20.)

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and broken down the middle wall of partition, promising to give us the same degree of happiness in his own due time, which is already enjoyed by, and in thee. (Luke xx. 35, 36.) For thus he hath declared, that *they who are worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, shall be equal unto the angels.* O Jerusalem, the eternal habitation of the eternal God ! mayest thou be the second darling of my soul, and only he be preferred before thee in my affection, who shed his blood to make me worthy of thee. Be thou the joy and comfort of my languishing mind, my great support in hardships and distresses ; may the remembrance of thee be ever sweet, and the mention of thy name a holy charm to drive away all sorrow from my soul.

CHAP. XXI.

The Miseries of the present Life.

WELL may I seek for some relief from these contemplations of a future state, since this in which I now am yields me no diversion, no satisfaction at all ; but is a painful and wearisome, a foul and tedious journey ; a wretched, decaying, and uncertain life ; a life of labour, and, which is worse, a life of sin, and pride, and folly ; full of miseries and errors, and rather death than life, since in it we die daily, by the constant decays and alterations of our bodies, and the sundry kinds of death, to which we stand every moment exposed.

And can we in any propriety of speech call this *living* ? Does that empty thing deserve the name of life, which is blotted with tumours ~~and~~

cerated with pains, burnt up with fevers, blasted by an infected air, fattened with eating, brought down with fasting; enervated with mirth, consumed with melancholy, shortened with care, stupefied with security; blown up with riches, dejected by poverty; made gay by youth, bowed down with age, broken with infirmities, and destroyed with griefs? Nay, as if all these evils were too little, the conclusion of them all is the tyranny of death, which puts a speedy period to what we falsely call the joys of life, and abolishes them and wears out all the footsteps and remembrances of them so utterly, that it is from thenceforth, as if they had never been at all.

And yet it is prodigious to consider how this strange mixture, for which we know not well how to find a name, this living death, or dying life, though in every part embittered by these and infinite other miseries; how it imposes, I say, upon the generality of mankind, and cheats them with lying promises of imaginary happiness. Nay, though the cheat be so gross, that the blindest of its admirers cannot but discover it; and the potion so nauseous, that the most stupid cannot but loath and be sick of it, yet still infinite are the fools that drink large draughts of its cup, and are intoxicated with the bewitching liquor. But happy are those few, those very few, who wisely keep their distance, and will not trust themselves in its treacherous embraces; who despise its vain superficial joys, and will have nothing to do with its flattering allurements, for fear at last it prove their fate to have the deceiver and the deceived perish together.

CHAP. XXII.

*The Happiness of that Life prepared for
them that love God.*

BUT, oh! that life which God hath laid up in store for them that love him! that life indeed! that happy, secure, serene, and most amiable, that pure and holy life: that life which fears no death, which feels no sorrow, which knows no sin, which languishes under no pain, is distracted with no care, is ruffled with no passion, lies at the mercy of no accidents: that incorruptible, that unchangeable life, which hath every thing that can attract our affections, and command our esteem. There will be no enemies to assault us, no envy to undermine us, no temptation to seduce us, no fears to confound us, but perfect love and harmony of souls; a day that never declines, a light that never goes out: there we shall see God face to face, and *when we awake up after his likeness, our souls shall be satisfied with it.* (Psal. xvii. 15.)

O let me indulge this delightful thought, and run over all the beauties and blisses with an unwearied desire! For the more I consider, the more passionately fond I grow of thee, and feel no pleasure comparable to the sweet reflections upon and impatient thirstings after thee. *Here will I dwell, for I have unspeakable delight therein.* Upon this will I fix my eyes, my heart, my studies; to this will I direct all my desires, and conform all my dispositions. This subject let me hear of continually, let it be my theme to write on, my entertainment in conversation. I will spend my private hours in reading of its bliss and glories; I will meditate frequently upon what I have read of it; that thus at least I may find

some refreshment, some loose from the miseries, and toils, and incumbrances, of a troublesome perishing life: and at last recline my weary head, and lay me down to sleep with joy, when I know that sleep shall be shaken off again, and the blessedness of this life, truly so called, immediately commence upon my waking.

This makes me walk with such delight in the pleasant gardens of the holy scripture; here I am diligent to gather the sweet flowers of God's word and promises: I devour them by reading; I chew the cud upon them by frequent recollection; I lay them up in my memory as a most valuable treasure; and, by tasting and feeding upon these delicious descriptions of another world, I take off great part of the bitter and nauseousness of this world.

O happy state! O truly glorious kingdom: without succession, without confusion! Where time is no longer measured by the revolutions of days and nights, summers and winters; but eternity is continued through one endless day, one ever-blooming spring. Where they, who have been victorious in their spiritual warfare, join in consort with the blessed angels, and sing the *Songs of Sion* without ceasing. There a never-fading crown adorns every head, and exquisite joy overflows every heart. O that my sins were blotted out, my pardon sealed! O when will it please God to give me leave to lay down this load and lumber of flesh, and admit me without spot or corruption into the true rest, the transporting delights of that blissful place! (Psal. xlviii. 8.) that I may *walk about the beauteous walls of the city of God, view all her palaces*, and receive a crown at the hand of my merciful Judge; when shall I make one in that holy choir, and behold the majestic presence of my Maker, with the *spirits of just men made perfect*? When shall I see my dear

Redeemer face to face, and approach that unspeakably bright, and as yet inaccessible light, which flows from the sun of righteousness? When O when, shall I be freed from the bondage of the fear of death, and possess the uninterrupted joy of an endless incorruptible state, conferred upon me by the bounty of *my God*?

CHAP. XXIII.

The Happiness of holy Souls at their Departure out of this World.

HAPPY the soul, which refined from this dross of earth, and got loose from its incubance of a body, soars up to heaven, and takes its dwelling there, secure from any future assaults and triumphant over death. Then does it feast upon the beauteous face of that dear Lord, whom it served, and loved, and longed to enjoy, in that glory and glad immortality to which it is at last arrived. A glory and gladness which no length of time will wear out, no envious adversary can take away. This is the spouse, which *the daughter saw and blessed her*; (Cant. vi. 9. and viii. 5.) *the queens and the concubines, and they praised her. Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved? Who is she that goeth up as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?* With what eager joy does she fly to the arms of her Lord, when with a joyful astonishment she hears the voice of his most affectionate call; *Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away? For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.* (Cant. ii. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.) *The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the*

tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, thou art in the cliffs of the rocks in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. Come, my chosen, my fair one, my dove, my spouse, and I will receive thee into my throne, for, I have longed for thy beauty. Come and rejoice before me with the angels, to whom I have promised to make thee a companion. Come after long toils and many dangers, and enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, a joy which no man taketh from thee. (Mat. xxv. 23. John xvi. 22.)

CHAP. XXIV.

A Prayer for Succour in Trouble and Danger.

BLESSED are all thy saints, my God and king, who have travelled over the tempestuous sea of mortality, and have at last made the desired port of peace and felicity; fearless of future hazards, and full of perpetual joy. This sea, thou my Saviour, didst condescend to try and be tost upon. O cast a gracious eye upon us who are still in our dangerous voyage. Thou art possèst of never-fading glory, but do not in the midst of thy own happiness, forget those who are beset with vast variety of miseries. Thou hast chosen us to thyself, and what we are or hope to be, is all thy gift; thou hast promised to make us immortal with and by thyself, and to bestow upon us the everlasting felicity of thy presence; O remember and succour us in our distress, and think on them who lie exposed to the rough storms of troubles and temptations.

Thou art the beautiful gate of heaven, *the door* at which the sheep must enter; but we alas! lie grovelling here below, and *our soul cleaveth to*

the dust. (John x. 9.) Stretch forth thy hand, and raise us up ; strengthen our weakness, that we may do valiantly in this spiritual war, who of ourselves are not able to stand against the mighty force that comes against us. Help us against our enemies power; help us against our own negligence and cowardice, and defend us from the treachery of our own unfaithful hearts. We are exceeding frail, exceeding weak and despicable, slaves to intemperance and lust, and indisposed to every virtuous and gallant undertaking. And yet, helpless wretches as we are, when listed under thy banner, and borne up by thy cross, we are buoyed up by thy faith, and commit ourselves boldly to this *great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts, where is that Leviathan*, that serpent ready to devour; (Psal. civ. 25, 26.) wherein are rocks and quicksands, and other dangers without number, on which the careless and the unbelieving run their vessels, and suffer shipwreck daily.

Intercede for me therefore, most gracious Saviour, that, by thy powerful mediation, and all-sufficient merits, I may be able to bring this vessel and its lading safe to shore; and be conducted to *the haven where every pious soul would be*, the haven of peace and salvation, of uninterrupted rest, and never-ending joy.

CHAP XXV.

The pious Soul's desire of Heaven.

O HEAVENLY *Jerusalem* ! Our common mother, the holy city of God, thou beautiful spouse of Christ, my soul hath loved thee exceedingly, and all my faculties are ravished with thy charms. O what graces, what glory, what

noble state appears in every part of thee! Most exquisite is thy form, and thou alone art beauty without blemish. Rejoice and dance for joy, O daughter of my king, for thy Lord himself, fairer than all the sons of men, hath *pleasure in thy beauty*. (Psal. xlv. 11.)

But, *what is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?* (Cant. v. 9; 10. ii. 3.) *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth, I sought him and found him. I hold him fast, and will not let him go, till he bring me into his house, into the secret places of his tabernacles. O glorious metropolis! there shalt thou give the children thy breast, and so fill me with the plentiful communication of thy pleasures, that I shall never hunger more, neither thirst any more.

O how happy will my soul perceive itself when it shall be admitted to see thy glory, thy beauty; to view the gates, the walls, the streets, the stately buildings, the splendor of thy inhabitants, and the triumphant pomp of thy king enthroned in the midst of thee! For thy walls are of precious stones, and thy gates of pearl, and thy streets of pure gold, continually resounding with loud *Hallelujahs*. Thy houses are founded upon hewn square stone, carried up with sapphire, covered in with gold, and no unclean person can enter into thee, no manner of pollution abide within thy borders.

Sweet and charming are thy delights, O holy mother of us all. Subject to none of those vicissitudes and interruptions which abate our pleasures here below. No successions of night and

day, no intervals of darkness, no difference of seasons in their several courses. Nor is the light derived from artificial helps, or natural luminaries, the same with ours; no lamps or candles, no shining of the moon or stars, but God of God, and light of light, even the sun of righteousness shines in thee, and the white immaculate lamb, he it is that enlightens thee with the full lustre of his majesty and beauty. (Rev. xxi. 23.) Thy light and glory, and all thy happiness, is the incessant contemplation of this divine king; for this King of kings is in the midst of thee, and all his host are ministering round about him continually.

There are the melodious choirs of angels, there the sweet fellowship and company of the heavenly inhabitants; there the joyful pomp of all those triumphant souls who from their sore trials and travels through this valley of tears, at last return victorious to their native country. There the goodly fellowship of prophets, whose eyes God opened to take a prospect of far distant mysteries. There the twelve leaders of the Christian armies, the blessed apostles; there the noble army of the martyrs; there the convention of confessors; there the holy men and women, who in the days of their flesh were mortified to the pleasures of sin and the world; there the virgins and youths, whose blooming virtues put out early fruits, and ripened into piety far exceeding the proportion of their years. There the sheep and lambs, who have escaped the ravening wolf, and all the snares laid for their destruction. These all rejoice in their proper mansions; and, though each differ from other in degrees of glory, yet all agree in bliss and joy, diffused to all in common; and the happiness of every one is esteemed each man's own.

For there charity reigns in its utmost perfec-

tion, because God there is all in all; whom they continually behold, and beholding continually admire, and praise and love, and love and praise without intermission, without end, without weariness, or distraction of thought. This is their constant, their delightful employments. And O how happy shall I be, how exquisitely, how incessantly happy, if, when this body crumbles into dust, I shall be entertained with that celestial harmony, and hear the hymns of praise to their eternal king, which troops of angels, and saints innumerable, are ever singing in full consort! How happy myself to bear a part with them, and pay the same tribute to my God and Saviour, the author and the captain of my salvation! To behold his face in glory, and be made partaker of those gracious promises, of which he hath given me the comfortable hope, when saying to his Father, *I will, that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* (John xvii. 5, 24.) And again, supporting his disciples against the tribulations they should encounter here below, (John xii. 26.) *If any man love me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be.* And in another place, *He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.* (John xiv. 21.)

CHAP. XXVI.

An Act of Praise.

BLESS the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. (Ps. ciii. 1, 22.) O praise the Lord, all ye works of his, in all places of his dominions; praise the Lord, O my

soul. Let us magnify that great God, whom angels praise, whom dominions adore, whom powers fall down and tremble before; whose excellent glory cherubim and seraphim proclaim with loud incessant voices: Let us then bear a part too in this heavenly song, and *together with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, laud and magnify that glorious name*; Let us tune our voices up with theirs, and though we cannot reach their pitch, yet will we exert the utmost of our skill and power, in this tribute to the same common Lord; and say with them, as poor mortals are able, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; heaven and earth are full of thy glory; glory be to thee, O Lord most high.*

For these are the happy spirits, who offer a sacrifice of pure praise before the throne of God continually, who are ever wrapt in the contemplations of his perfections; and see them, not like us, *through a glass darkly*, but near at hand, and *face to face*. (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) What tongue can express, what thought conceive, the admirable beauty, the exact order, the numberless multitude of this heavenly host? The inexhaustible source of joy springing from the beatific vision; the fervent love which ministers delight without torment; the ever-growing desire, which rises with their satisfactions, and the grateful satisfactions which crown that desire; A desire always eager, and never uneasy, always full, and never cloyed: The blessedness derived down to them, by their inseparable union to the fountain of all bliss; the light communicated to them from the original light; the happy change into an immutable nature, by seeing the immutable God as he is, and being transformed into the likeness of him they see! (1 John ii. 3.)


But how, alas! should we hope to comprehend the divinity and bliss of angels so far above us,

when we feel ourselves unable to find out the nature and perfections of this very soul within us? What sort of being must this be, which inspires a lump of dead flesh with life and activity, and yet, when most desirous so to do, cannot confine its thoughts to holy exercises? What a mixture of power and impotence is here? How great, and yet, how poor and little is this principle, which dives into the secrets of the most high, searches the deep things of God, and expands itself to celestial objects at the same time that it is forced to employ its talent in the invention of useful arts, and to serve the necessities of a mortal life? What sort of creature is this, that knows so much of other things, and so little of itself? So ingenious in matters abroad, so perfectly in the dark to what is done at home? Specious, but very disputable notions have indeed been advanced concerning the origin of our soul, but all we know of it amounts at last to this; That it is an intellectual spirit, created by the almighty power of its Divine maker, endued with such an immortality as he was pleased to qualify it for; enlivening and sustaining a body subject to change, corruption, and death, and liable to all the unequal affections of fear and joy, and every turbulent passion, that in their turns exalt and depress, enlarge or contract its powers.

And what an amazing thing is this now! The more we attend to it, the more we shall find ourselves lost in wonder. When we read, or speak, or write of God, the great Creator of the universe, we can deliver ourselves clearly and distinctly, though at the same time his perfections be too vast for our words to express, or our minds to comprehend; the subject, not of an adequate conception, but of an awful astonishment. But when we descend lower, and treat of angels, and created spirits, of souls united to bodies, and be-

ings of the same level with, or a condition inferior to, our own ; we are not able to support our ideas with proofs so incontestable ; and find it impracticable to satisfy ourselves or others in the enquiries concerning them. Why then should we, to so very little purpose, hover uncertainly about these lower regions, and spend our time and pains in groping in the dark ? No, let our minds rather enlarge their thoughts, and take a nobler range ; Let them leave all created objects behind, and run, and mount, and fly aloft : and, taking faith to the assistance of reason, fix their eyes with the utmost intenseness our nature will bear, upon the Creator, the universal cause. Yes, I will make a ladder, like that of *Jacob's*, (Gen. xxviii. 12.) reaching from earth to heaven, and as by rounds, go up from my body to my soul, from my own soul to that eternal spirit that made it : who sustains, preserves it always with me, about me, above me ; thus skipping over all the intermediate stages of being, and re-uniting my own soul to him, from whom it came, and in whose image it was created.

Whatever bodily eyes can discern, whatever leaves impressions upon my imaginative faculty, shall be resolutely set out of the way, as a hindrance to that more abstracted contemplation, which my mind is desirous to indulge. A pure and simple act of the understanding, is that which must carry me up, and boldly soar at once to the creator of angels, and souls, and all things. And happy is that soul, which refusing to be detained by low and viler objects, directs its flight to the noblest and most exalted, and, like the eagle, builds its nest in the top of the rocks, and keeps its eye steady upon the sun of righteousness : For no beauty is so charming, no pleasure so transporting, as that with which our eyes and mind are feasted, when our greedy sight and eager af-



sections are determined to our God and Saviour, as to their only proper centre; when, by a wondrous mystical, but true and spiritual act of vision, we see him who is invisible; behold a light far different from this, which cheers our senses, and taste a pleasure infinitely sweeter than any this world and its joys can afford: For this is a short and insincere pleasure; this is a dim and feeble light, confined to a narrow space, always in motion from us, and in a few hours put out by constant returns of darkness: These are enjoyments which the great Creator hath distributed to brutes, nay, to the vilest of insects, in common with mankind; and therefore let us thirst and aspire after such as are truly Divine; for what even swine and worms share with us, cannot deserve the name of light and pleasure, but, in comparison of those more refined, are to be esteemed no better than pain and night.

CHAP. XXVII.

How God may be seen, and possessed of Man.

THIS supreme and immutable Being, this glorious sun that never sets, this true, unclouded, and eternal light, the light of angels and men, cannot indeed be seen with mortal eyes, nor must we hope in this life to approach it, that blessing is reserved for glorified saints in heaven; and therein chiefly does the excellence of their reward and happiness consist. But yet are we not even now shut out from all perception of it neither: For to believe in, to meditate upon, to understand, and ardently to thirst after God, to make him the sole object of our thoughts and desires; this is in some sense to see, and to possess him. And since our capacity extends thus far at present, let us exert those little powers we

have; Let our voices be lifted up on high, and our souls make God their study; and let us, to the best of our ability, entertain him with his own praises. For *it is very meet, right, and our bounden duty*, that the creature should publish the goodness of the Creator; since he created us for the illustration of his happiness, not to stand in need of any glory we can give him, nor can we add to what he hath already. (Ps. xlvii. 7.)

For he is power incomprehensible, possessing all things, and self-sufficient. *Great is our Lord, and great is his power, yea, and his wisdom is infinite. Great is our Lord and marvellous, and worthy to be praised.* (Ps. cxlv. 3.) Let this then be the object of our love; this the subject of our song; this the ground of our labour and studies. And let our mind, and tongue, and hands be continually exercised in desiring, speaking, singing, writing of him. Let the delights of this heavenly rhetoric be our daily food and feast, that, filled with this Divine nourishment, we may cry out with the most earnest contention of heart and voice, with joy and gladness, and most fervent zeal, and proclaim the excellences of our God after the following manner.

CHAP. XXVIII.

MOST great, most gracious, most mighty, most just, most merciful, omnipresent and incomprehensible Lord God! Thou art invisible and yet seest all things, unchangeable and changest all things; immortal, uncircumscribed, without bound, without end, unspeakable, unsearchable, unmoved, and giving motion to all things; fearful and glorious; to be honoured and revered, and adored with the most profound humility; never new, never old; and yet making all things

new, and consuming their gayest pride with age, though they regard it not.

Always in action, and yet always at rest: sustaining all things, and yet feeling no burthen; feeling all things, and yet included in nothing; creating, protecting, nourishing, maintaining, improving all things: Thou seekest, and yet thou lackest not; thou lovest without passion, art jealous without disturbance; thou repentest without remorse; art angry without perturbation; changest thy works, but not thy resolution; thou receivest what thou hadst never lost; art never poor, and yet rejoicest in the gaining of sinners; art not covetous, and yet expectest *thy own with envy*; and art pleased to account thyself a debtor to them who do good for thy sake. (Mat. xxv. 27.)

But who, alas, can do! who is possessed of any good, which is not thine already? Thou payest debts, and yet owest nothing: Thou forgivest debts, and art no loser by thy mercy: Thou givest life and being to all; art every where, and all in all: Thou mayest be felt and perceived, but not seen; art distant from no place, and yet far from the ungodly! For where thou art not by thy grace and favour, thou still art present by thy observation and vengeance. Thou communicatest thyself to all, but not to all equally. To some things thou impartest being, but not life, or sense, or understanding. To some, being and life, but not sense and understanding. To some again, being, and life, and sense, but not understanding. To some, lastly, thy bounty extends so far, as to bestow all these. And though thou always be the same, perfectly consistent with thyself, yet nothing is more different than that vast variety, of gifts and dispensations, wherein thy different influences are shed abroad upon different sorts of creatures.

We are in continual pursuit of thee, and though

thou move not away from us, yet can we not apprehend thee. Thou possessest all things, compassesst all, surmountest all, upholdest all; yet dost not so uphold all, as to have any thing above thee; nor so fill all, as to have any thing without thee; but at once fillest and containest, sustainest and surmountest all.

Thou teachest the hearts of the faithful without the formality of words, and speakest to them without the noise of articulate sounds. *Thy wisdom reacheth from one end to the other mightily, and sweetly doth she order all things.* (Wisd. iii. 1.) Thou art neither enlarged by any addition of space, nor changed by any revolution of time. Thou inhabitest the light, which no man can approach; indivisible, because strictly and simply one, having no parts, fillest all things with the whole of thyself.

Finite minds cannot distinctly conceive, nor artful expressions declare, nor whole volumes and libraries explain the depths and intricacies of this mystery. For what can describe that greatness which is above all quantity, and that transcendent goodness which is above all quality? This is perfect goodness indeed; and therefore none is truly good but thou alone, with whom to intend is to finish, and to will is to be able to perform.

Thou madest all things out of nothing, merely because it was thy good pleasure so to do. Thou possessest all things, not because thou needest any: Thou governest all without care or toil, and nothing in heaven above, or in earth, nor in hell beneath, hath power to countermand, or in any degree to disturb thy regular management, or break the beauteous order of thy universe.

Thou art not the author of any evil: this is what even that power, which can do all things, cannot do; for the being able to do this would argue a defect, and not a perfection of power.

Nor canst thou repent of any thing thou hast done, because thy wisdom always does the best: nor canst thou be disordered with any tumultuous passions, for these are the tempests and commotions of weak minds: nor could the danger or ruin of the whole world be any detriment to thee, for that were to have a happiness depending on thy own creatures: nor canst thou approve or commend any wicked action, for that were a blemish to thy holiness, and would make thee cease to be God.

Thou never lyest, because thou art eternal truth: by thy bounty alone we are created; by thy justice we are punished for our offences; and by thy clemency we are delivered from vengeance and destruction. No material being whether earthly or heavenly body, no active principle (not even that of fire) which can affect our senses, ought to be worshipped for thee; for thou alone hast self-existence, and never changest from what thou art: Hence is thy name *Jehovah*, denoting that *thou art always the same, and thy years shall not fail*. (Exod. iii. 14. Psal. cii. 27.) These, and many other necessary and saving truths of thy church hath taught me, of which I acknowledge it thy special favour to have been made a member. For here I learnt, that thou art the one, the true God, without body, parts, or passions: and that no part of thy substance is capable of change or corruption, compounded or made. This makes it evident, that no bodily eye can discern thee, and that no mortal can see thee in thy proper essence: hence it is also plain, that from the same cause, which enables angels to behold thee now, we also after this life shall be enabled to behold thee. But even those glorious and intellectual spirits cannot see thee in all points as thou art; for thy mysterious unity of essence in trinity of

persons, as it hath nothing like itself, so it is fully comprehended by nothing but itself.

CHAP XXIX.

Of the Plurality of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence.

THOU, my God, art but one with regard to thy nature, but the persons to whom this nature is communicated are several : and thus in different respects thou art capable and incapable of becoming the object of number, and measure, and weight. We do not acknowledge any beginning of that goodness, whereof thy essence consists, but believe all things whatsoever to be from and by, and in this ; and that there is no other thing good, except so far, as it participates of, and receives its goodness from thee. Thy Divine essence is, and ever was without matter, but not without form : the perfect, most beautiful, and true original form ; which like thy seal, thou sealest upon every thing, and still, without addition or diminution to thyself, diversifiest thy own works after a wonderful manner, and makest them to differ from thee, and from each other, according to the different characters impressed upon them by their Maker's hand. For whatsoever is made, is made by thee alone.

O Lord omnipotent, thou great Three-One whose almighty power possesses, governs, and fills all things ; yet so as that the greatest hath not more, nor the least less, but so as to be all in all, and all to be in thee ; as it is written, *Whither shall I go from thy spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I climb up to heaven thou art there ; if I go down to hell, thou art there also ; If I take the wings of the morning, and re-*

main in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. (Psal. cxxxix. 7, 8, 9, 10.) Thus art thou present with every thing, and every thing with thee : not by any local extension, but by thy virtue and power, and communication of thyself.

Now since thy nature is simply and inseparably one, we must not so conceive of the trinity, as if the persons in it could be really separated from one another. This is indeed distinguished into three, and each person hath a different name and title ; but still no name belongs to any one of them, which does not at the same time refer to the rest, according to the different properties and mutual relations of each to other. The Father includes the notion of a Son ; the Son that of a Father ; The Holy Spirit, Father and Son both. And all those titles used to express the power, and essence, and perfections ; and whatever is included in the name of God, belongs to every person equally. There is not therefore any thing which may be truly affirmed of the Father as God but may with equal truth be affirmed of the Son, or Holy Ghost, as God. We say that the Father is God by nature, so we say likewise that the Son and the Holy Ghost are ; and yet they are not three Gods by nature, but Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one and the self-same God.

So that our understanding embraces but one undivided essence, though, for our more distinct conception of this essence, we distinguish the several subsistences in it, by calling them different persons. But still, that this plurality of persons does not infer a plurality of beings, is manifest from hence, that the name of each person has a necessary respect to the other two. If I mention the Father, I include the Son ; if the Son, I include the Father : if the Spirit, I must unavoidably be understood to refer to some whose spirit

this is, and so imply Father and Son both. This is the true faith; this is the result of sound doctrine, such as Almighty God hath taught in his Church, and by her ministry educated me in the belief and full persuasion of.

CHAP. XXX.

A Prayer to the ever-blessed Trinity.

IN this faith, which I do not only profess with all possible sincerity, but thankfully acknowledge to be thy gracious gift, for the benefit and salvation of my soul, I call upon my God. And reason good I have to be thankful for this gift, since the believing soul lives by faith, and by hope embraces that at present which it shall one day see in thee. To thee therefore I come, with a mind thus enlightened, full of chaste and holy desires, happily brought out of the dark night of ignorance, to the knowledge of thy Divine truth; and delivered from the seducing charms of a treacherous and calamitous world, to taste the sweets of that love, which places all its hopes and joys in thee: even thee, O blessed and glorious trinity in unity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, my God, my Lord, my Comforter! Love, mercy, and communion of grace!

O thou that begettest! O thou that art begotten! O thou that begettest us again to a new life! Source of light, light of light, distributor of light; the spring, the stream, the watering, the one of whom, the one by whom, the one in whom are all things! Thou life in thyself, life in thyself derived from life in himself, the Lord and giver of life; one originally, one of one, one from the other two; truth the Father, truth the Son, truth the Holy Ghost! For in all three is but one essence, one power, one goodness, one

blessedness, from and by, and in whom whatever else is blessed, receives its blessedness.

CHAP. XXXI.

God the True Life.

O GOD, the true life, of, and by, and in whom all things live, the common source of all good! our faith in thee excites, our hope exalts, our love unites us. Thou commandest us to seek thee, and art ready to be found; thou biddest us knock, and openest when we do so. (Mat. vii. 7.) To turn from thee, is to fall into ruin and death. To turn to thee, is to rise to life and glory. To abide in thee, is to stand fast and secure from danger. No man loses thee, who does not suffer himself to be deceived: no man seeks thee, who does not submit to instruction and reproof; no man finds thee, who does not seek after thee with a clean heart and purified affections. To know thee is life, to serve thee is freedom, to enjoy thee is a kingdom, to praise thee is the joy and happiness of the soul. I praise, and bless, and adore thee, with heart, and voice, and every faculty; *I worship thee, I glorify thee, I give thanks to thee for thy great glory, for thy great goodness, for thy innumerable and inestimable mercies, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.*

I humbly beseech thee, O blessed Trinity, to come to me, to abide with me, to reign in me, to make this heart of mine a holy temple, a fit habitation for thy majesty. I entreat the Father by the Son, the Son by the Father, the Holy Ghost by the Father and the Son, that all those vicious dispositions may be removed far from me which might give offence to those eyes which cannot behold iniquity; and that all those virtues may be implanted, and grow, and flourish, and abound in

me, in which the God of unity delights. O thou Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible! keep, I beseech thee, the work of thy own hands, who trusts in thy mercy alone for safety and protection. Guard me with the power of thy grace, here and in all places, now and at all times, within and without, before and behind, above and below; let thy holy angels pitch their tents round about me, and so possess themselves of all the passes to my heart, that the treacherous enemy of souls may have no place left open, whereby to make his approach.

Thou art the guardian and defender of all that depend upon thee; without whose watchful care none can be safe; without whose mighty power none is a match for the dangers and temptations which every moment beset him. *Thou art God, and there is none beside thee*, in heaven above, or in earth beneath: *Thou art great and dost wondrous things*; (Isa. xlv. 5; Ps. lxxvii. 14.) Who can recount, who can conceive them? Honour and praise are thine; angels and spirits, and all the creation join in setting forth thy glory, and paying the constant humble homage due from creatures to their Creator, from servants to their Lord, from subjects and soldiers to their victorious Leader and universal King.

CHAP. XXXII.

The Praises of Angels and Men.

TO thee the pure and lowly in heart, to thee the souls of the righteous, to thee the citizens of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, to thee the numerous orders of intellectual spirits, sing hymns of joy perpetually; fall down before thy throne, cast their crowns at thy feet, and with profoundest reverence adore the brightness of thy majesty.

Not only these, but man, a valuable part of the creation, since formed in thy resemblance, and placed chief in honour of all things here below, he joins in praises too, though not able to discharge the duty with the same noble and exalted zeal as the bright hosts of heaven. Nay, even I, the last and least of men, laden with sin and frailty, do yet desire to *magnify thee worthily*, and to *love thee perfectly*. Help me, my God, my life, my strength, assist the desires thou canst not but approve, and make me capable of glorifying thee. Shed abroad thy light in my heart, put thy word in my mouth, that my *heart may be filled with thy praise, and my tongue may sing of thy glory and honour all the day long*.

But, in regard *praise is not comely in the mouth of a sinner*, and I, alas! *am a man of unclean lips*, purge me, I beseech thee, from all manner of impurity; *touch my heart and tongue with a coal from thy altar*; (Isai. vi. 5, 6.) wash away my filth, and purify all my dross, so shall I be fit to offer thee the sacrifice of praise. And when I do so, be thou graciously pleased to accept the little I can give; according to the inclination and sincerity of my heart, accept *the calves of my lips*. *Let my prayer be set forth in thy presence, and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice*. (Hos. xiv. 2; Ps. cxli. 2.) Let the continual, and the most delightful remembrance of thee diffuse a constant joy through my wholesoul, and transport it with a most ardent love of invisible blessings, that my affections may rise from earth to heaven, from temporal objects to eternal, and from the dark confused view of the creature, to the astonishing and beatific vision of the Creator. (Ps. xlii. 1.)

O eternal truth, and true love, and beloved eternity! my soul panteth after thee day and night; on thee all my hopes and thoughts are

fixed, and in the enjoyment of thee are all determined. He that knows thee, knows truth and eternity; for thou art seated on high, above all; (1 Cor xiii. 12.) whom, when this life of dimness is dispersed, and the veil of mortal flesh drawn aside, we see thee *as thou art*. (1 John iii. 2.) At present the language wherewith others accost me is, *Where is thy God?* and the question I often put to thee is, *Where art thou now, my God?* I now and then take breath and seem to live, when I *pour out my heart before thee in the voice of joy and thanksgiving*; (Ps. xlii. 4.) but even in the midst of mirth, a damp comes over my spirits, because my soul falls back again from these pleasing exercises; and even when most desirous to mount up above the highest heavens, feels itself dragged down into a dark and great deep, or rather finds itself to be no better than a dark and great deep.

In this abyss indeed sometimes I perceive some glimmerings of light, from that faith which thou hast kindled to shine in the darkness. This sometimes rouses me in *David's strain*, *Why art thou so heavy, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me?* Still put thy trust in God: *His word is a lanthorn to my feet, and a light unto my paths*. (Ps. xliii. 5; cxix. 105.) Still trust in God till the night wear off, and the wrath of God, of which we were some time *children*, be over-past, and the overflowings of ungodliness be carried clean away. (Eph. ii. 3.) The remains of these miseries we must be content to carry about us, while burdened with a body dead in regard of sin, till such time as the shades and thick clouds be dispelled by the dawn of the day of life. *Put thou thy trust in God and tarry his pleasure*: for in the morning I shall stand before him, and behold his glory, and be filled with his praise. Even his, who shall *quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us*. His, who shall make us *light*, that we may

be *children of the day*, and not any longer of the *night, nor of darkness*. For *we were sometimes darkness, but now are we light in the Lord*, but such we are, as yet by faith only, and not by sight and fruition. For we are *saved through hope; but hope that is seen, is not hope*. (Rom. viii. 11; 1 Thess. v. 5; Eph. v. 8; Rom. viii. 24.)

The numerous progeny of angels and celestial spirits do indeed glorify thy name after a manner very different from ours. They have no need to study the holy Scriptures, and learn from thence the glories of thy essence. They see the blessed trinity face to face, and read in thee the counsels of thy eternal will and wisdom: they read, and choose, and love all thy good pleasure; and what they read, they never lose the remembrance of. Nor shall this book ever be shut to them; because thou art ever present with them, the same to all eternity, exhibiting thyself continually to their understandings. O blessed spirits, who are thus enabled to offer thee the tribute of their praise without any mixture of infirmity, without any interruption, without the alloy of anxious care and sorrow, who drink of *thy pleasures, as out of a river*, and exult with the sweet transports of joy unspeakable. For their praise and their joy flow both from the same source; and they who always see thee, cannot but always praise, and always rejoice in thee.

But we poor feeble mortals, weighed down with a body of corruption, placed at a vast distance from the bright beams of thy countenance, and distracted with variety of worldly cares and events, are not in a condition of glorifying thee worthily. Our prospect is but dark and very remote, and the little we are able to do is by the help of faith, and not by sight. But those celestial spirits wait about thy throne, and act by sight, and not by faith. This gives them a capacity of knowing,

and loving, and praising, above what the present state of flesh and blood will admit, even the most exalted devotee upon earth to attain to. But notwithstanding the different manner and value of their more perfect and our feebler praises, still thou art the same God, the common Father and creator of angels and men. The sacrifice is the same offered in heaven and in earth, and centres all in thee at last, from whatsoever quarter it come. Nor do our weakest essays, when compared with their noblest performances, discourage us from hoping, that we shall one day, by thy bounteous mercy, be received up to the same blissful mansions, made members of the heavenly choir, and in their company see, and adore, and praise thy glorious name for ever. In the meanwhile, Lord, grant me thy assistance, that while I sojourn in this mortal body, I may do all for which my present circumstances are qualified; that my heart may be sensibly affected with thy goodness, my tongue continually speak of thy honour, and *all my bones say, Lord, who is like unto thee?* (Ps. xxxv. 10.)

Thou art that God Almighty, three in person, but one in substance, the Father begotten of none, the Son only begotten of the Father, the Holy Ghost proceeding from, yet ever remaining in, the Father and Son both; whom we admire and adore, as trinity in unity, and unity in trinity: When we were nothing, thy power gave us being: when we were lost by sin, and worse than nothing, thy inestimable mercy contrived a wonderful method of restoring us to a new, and spiritual, and better life. O suffer us not to be insensible and unthankful under so gracious a dispensation! Help us to walk worthy of thy manifold, thy unspeakable mercies; and increase in us daily thy graces; strengthen our faith, exalt our hope, and inflame and enlarge our charity

Enable us, by the powerful influence of thy blessed Spirit, to continue stedfast in the belief of thy truth, and plentifully to bring forth the fruits agreeable to that belief; that so, by a true faith, and a suitable practice, thy mercy may at last bring us to the attainment of everlasting salvation; that we may be *with thee where thou art*, and *see thee as thou art*, and adore the brightness of thy majesty, and join our hearts and voices with those whom thou hast already admitted to that glorious sight, in hymns of joy and praise. Saying with all the company of heaven, glory to the Father whose wisdom created us; glory to the Son, whose love redeemed us; glory to the Holy Spirit, whose graces sanctified us; glory to the almighty and undivided trinity, whose works are inseparable, and dominion without end. To thee belongs praise, and thanksgiving, and honour, and blessing: and therefore all honour, and power, and thanks, and praise be unto thee our God, for ever and ever,

CHAP. XXXIII.

A Prayer for Zeal in the Service and Praise of God.

PARDON, O gracious Lord, pardon and pity, most tender Father, my wretched ignorance and manifold imperfections. Do not reject my forwardness as rash and over-bold, because I, who am but a servant, (O that I were but a good, and not a careless and unprofitable, and therefore a wicked and most unworthy servant) presume to praise and adore the great and terrible God. (Luke xvii. 10.) And when I do so, feel not my heart touched with that deep contrition, nor my eyes overflowing with tears, nor my soul humbled with that awful reverence and godly fear, which

best become my vileness and thy majesty. For sure, if angels themselves fall down and tremble before thee, it is but fit that so sinful a creature as I should approach thee with dread and sorrow; with sad apprehensions of the justice I have provoked to anger, and constant lamentations of my own guilt and unworthiness; that I should exceedingly fear and quake, and never come into thy presence, but with a pale dejected countenance, with weeping eyes and shivering limbs. This I am sensible I ought, and this I wish to do; but yet I do it not because I cannot do what I sincerely wish I could, and wonder greatly that I cannot bring myself to do. But who is able to do this, without the assistance of thy grace? For, as our salvation itself is entirely thy gift, so every pious disposition, which tends to qualify us for it, is of thy great and free mercy.

O wretched man! whose heart is so hard, so stupid, as not to be broken with the terrors of the great God, when he appears before thee and takes upon him to publish thy praise! O flinty creature, more impenetrable than the nether milstone, whose eyes do not melt even into floods of tears, when the least of all the servants expostulates with his Master, man with God, the creature with his Creator, dust and ashes with him who made me out of nothing! Behold, O Lord, I lay myself open before thee, and do not spare to tell all the world the mean and guilty reflections with which my thoughts upbraid me when alone. I only beg, that thou, who art rich in mercy, wilt impart to me out of thy abundance; and from the treasures of thy goodness let me receive something which may be graciously accepted by thee. For we can only serve thee of thy own; and if at any time thou art pleased with our endeavours, those very endeavours are of the ability which thou thyself didst first vouchsafe to give us.

Do thou, therefore, from whom every good gift cometh, strike this rock, that the waters of holy sorrow may flow out abundantly : and when this sinful soul attempts to pay its tribute of praises and thanksgiving, let it be done with that becoming mixture of humility and remorse, of profound reverence and inward purity, and holy joy, which they who love thee perfectly, and praise thee worthily, feel their hearts affected with ; such as may entitle me to all those spiritual comforts described in Scripture ; when it is said, *O taste and see how gracious the Lord is. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. Blessed is the people that can rejoice in thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are thy ways, who passing through the valley of weeping make it a well, and go from strength to strength, till they appear in Sion.* And, *blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* And again, *Blessed, Lord, are they that dwell in thy house, they will be always praising thee.* (Ps. xxxiv. 84 ; lxxxiv. 5, 6, 7 ; Matt. v. 8.)

CHAP. XXXIV.

An Act of Devotion and Love of God.

O BLESSED Jesus, my sacrifice and ransom, the delight and desire of my soul, God of God ! mercifully assist the prayers of thy humble servant. On thee I call, to thee I cry with a loud voice, and from the very bottom of my heart. Thy presence I invite into my soul, O enter there and fit it up for thyself, that it may not offend thee *by spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but be holy and without blemish.* (Ephes. v. 27.) For sure a clean dwelling only can be acceptable to the purity of so Divine an inhabitant. Do thou therefore sanctify me, a vessel made by thy own hand ; and make me fit for thy own use : purge out all the

remains of wickedness ; fill me with thy grace, and keep me ever in that fulness, that I may be built up a holy temple, an habitation such as my God will not disdain here and for ever. O sweetest, kindest, dearest, most powerful, most precious, loveliest and most beautiful Saviour ! more delicious than honey, whiter than snow, of more value than gold and precious stones, and dearer to me than all the riches, and honours, and pleasures this world can afford !

But what does all I have said amount to, my God, my only hope, my unspeakable mercy ? What have I said, my sweet repose, my sure refuge, in all this ? Alas ! I say as much as I can, though in no degree what I ought, upon so glorious a subject. O that I were capable of expressing thy excellences in as perfect and becoming a manner as the melodious choirs of angels do in their perpetual consorts of praise ! How gladly would I then spend all my breath, and even warble out my soul in songs of thanksgiving ? With what ardent, what indefatigable devotion would I proclaim thy glories in the midst of thy congregations ! But if I cannot do so much as becomes me, is that a reason why I should do nothing ? No, I will exert my utmost powers, and speak my best, though I can never speak enough : for woe to them that are silent on this occasion ; since them who are willing thou renderest able, making even the dumb to speak ; and out of the mouths of *very babes and sucklings perfecting praise*. (Ps. viii. 2.) Woe then to them who do not employ their tongues to thy honour, since even the greatest masters of eloquence, who use them most and best, yet in effect are dumb, and say nothing to purpose, when they do not employ their tongues to thy honour.

Who can set forth thy greatness as it deserves, O inexpressible power and wisdom of the Father !

conduct I may proceed from *strength to strength*, till at length I see the God of gods in Sion; (Ps. lxxxiv. 7.) and whom I now can only take an imperfect glimpse of through a dark and broken glass, may then behold face to face, and know even as I am known. (1 Cor. xiii. 12; Mat. v. 8.) And since this is a blessing promised in a peculiar manner to the *pure in heart*, I intreat thee, by all that goodness and compassion, which hath delivered us from death eternal, let thy most powerful holy union soften this tough, hard, rocky heart of mine, and render it susceptible of tender and good impressions, that the fire of compunction and holy zeal may be cherished there continually, and render it a daily living sacrifice unto thee.

Grant me the grace of a humble and contrite spirit, that I may come into thy presence washed clean with tears of godly sorrow. And let my affections be so inseparably united to thee, that I may have no carnal desires left, but be utterly cold and dead to this world. Let me not so much as remember transitory things for the vehemence of that fear and love I bear to God; that these momentary trifles may no longer be matter of grief or joy, or concern to me; nor any flattering prosperity have power to bias or corrupt my heart, nor any terror of adversity to shake my constancy. And because the love of thee is strong as death itself, let this, I beseech thee, entirely possess and swallow up my soul; let that sweet and holy fire consume all the dross of worldly affections, that I may cleave to thee alone, and make it my constant meat and drink to do thy will, and know no refreshments but such as flow from the delightful remembrances of thee. (John iv.)

Send down, O Lord, send down into my heart thy precious odours, that I may be ravished with

the fragrance of my heavenly spouse. Let the delightful relish of thy sweetness excite in me holy and eager desires, and be in me a *well of living water springing up to everlasting life*. (John iv. 14.) Thy greatness, O my God, is unmeasurable, and therefore the love of thee ought to be so too : for sure no bounds ought to determine the gratitude and praise of those whom thou hast vouchsafed to redeem with thy own most precious blood. O tender lover of souls ! O merciful Lord ! O righteous Judge ! to whom *thy Father hath committed all judgment*. Thou seest and hast declared how fit it is, that the *children of this world should not in their generation be wiser than the children of light* ; (Luke xvi. 8.) that the sons of night and darkness ought to be our pattern ; and that it is just matter of reproach to us, if they shall love and pursue the perishing riches and fleeting pleasures and advantages with a more intense desire, and more unwearied endeavours than thy own servants seek and love the source and sum of their true happiness : even thee, their God, who made them when they were not, and redeemed them when otherwise it were better for them not to have been at all.

And if one man love another man so fervently, if a spouse be so fond of her beloved, as not, without the utmost impatience, and even insupportable grief, to bear the absence of a friend so dear : what affection, what zeal, what ardent desire of constant union, ought that soul to express, whom thou hast betrothed and married to thyself by faithfulness and mercies manifold ? How ought we to be conversing with, and enjoying the great God, the most amiable husband, who hath loved us and saved us after so astonishing a manner, and for our sakes done so many, so great, so kind, so wonderful things ! For though the objects here below have indeed some delights

peculiar to themselves, which attract our hearts, and kindle affections and desires proportioned to them; yet do not they affect us after the same manner, as thou our God, and the blessed objects above do. The righteous man rejoices in thee, because the love of thee is a calm and sweet resentment. For every breast thus disposed, is filled with an equal, secure and serene pleasure. But the love of the world and the flesh is ruffled with anxious fears and violent emotions: it utterly destroys the peace of the soul where it takes possession, and distracts them with cares and suspicions, with jealousy and passions, and a thousand uneasy apprehensions.

Most justly, therefore, art thou the joy and delight of good men, because thou art the only heaven where they are at rest; and with thee alone is that life which brings quietness and assurance, settled and sincere pleasure. He that enters into thee, enters into the joy of his Lord, where fears of future evils have no place. Fixed in this most happy station, and secure of change or danger, he can speak comfort to his soul in these words of the psalmist, *This shall be my rest for ever, here I dwell, for I have a delight therein.* (Ps. cxxxii. 14. xxiii. 1, 2.) And again, *The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing: he shall make me to lie down in green pastures, and send me forth beside the still waters.*

O that it might please my sweetest, dearest Jesus, to fill my heart with such a love of him, as never can be quenched; to be ever present in mind, that I may be all over love, and burn with perpetual desires of his company and enjoyment. Let this desire exalt my heart, and enable it to throw off that troublesome load of sensual and worldly affections, which now obstruct and press me down, and do but add to my miseries, instead of gratifying my inclinations. And, having laid

aside this weight, help me to run cheerfully and apace after the odour of thy ointments, still keeping on my course without incumbrance or diversion, till by thy gracious guidance I at last shall be received to thy own self, there to be feasted for ever with the pleasures of thy beauteous presence.

For two so different passions, a good and evil, a sweet and bitter, cannot dwell together in the same breast. And therefore, if a man love any thing besides thee, the love of God is not in him. (1 John ii. 15.) O love of exquisite pleasure, and exquisite pleasure of love! Love, all delight without allay of torment; love, chaste and perfect, whose bright flame never can be extinct, but burns pure and cheerful to all eternity; my God, my Jesus, who art love and pleasure in the abstract, inflame my every part with this holy fire, pour thy transporting joys, thy inexpressible comforts and sweet raptures abundantly into my soul: kindle there desires chaste and holy, peaceful and calm, pleasant and secure, that thus overflowing with delight, and inflamed with desire, I may love thee, *my God, with all my heart, and soul, and strength:* (Mark xii. 30.) That thou mayest be always in my mind, and mouth, and sight, at all times, and in all places; and so refresh me, that no room may be left for any other, which are indeed no better than unfaithful and adulterous passions.

Hear me, my God; hear, thou light of my eyes; hear what I ask, and grant my petitions; and that thou mayest hear me effectually, do thou inspire and direct my petitions. O merciful and gracious Lord! let not my manifold offences stop thy ears against my prayers, nor shut out thy mercy from me: but let thy servant obtain his requests, though not for any merit of his own, yet for the sake of his merits and intercession in whom alone he trusts, and by him only presumes

to ask any thing : even the blessed Jesus, the son of thy love, the *one*, the powerful *mediator between God and man* ; (1 Tim. ii. 5.) who, with thee and thy blessed Spirit, liveth and reigneth for ever! *Amen.*

CHAP. XXXV.

A Devout Prayer to CHRIST.

O LORD Jesus, the anointed of God, the word of the Father, who camest into the world on purpose to save sinners ! I conjure thee by the most enlarged bowels of thy indulgent mercy, let *me cease to do evil, learn to do well*, and reduce all my actions to rule and due order ; take away from me *whatsoever is offensive* to thee, and hurtful to myself ; and implant in me all those virtues and graces which may conduce to my soul's advantage, and thy good liking and acceptance of me. (Job xiv. 4.) *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean*, (Rom. iv. 5.) but thou alone ? Thou art a God infinite in goodness and power, *justifying the ungodly, quickening them that lay dead in trespasses and sins*, (Eph. ii. 1.) changing the hearts of men, and forming them into new and different creatures. Thy eyes behold my many and great imperfections : look down upon them with an eye of pity, send down thy hand of compassion from above, and remove far from me whatever is displeasing in thy sight. My spiritual health and diseases are both in thysight, O strengthen, I beseech thee, and preserve the former, and in much mercy heal the latter.

Heal thou me, blessed Physician of souls, and so shall I be healed ; hold thou me up, thou almighty preserver of men, and so shall I be safe. Thou who *givest medicines for the cure of our sickness*, (Ps. cxlvii. 3.) and sustaineest that health

which is thy own; thou who reparaest our breaches, and buildest up our decayed ruins with a word of thy mouth. If thou think fit (as I hope thou wilt) to sow the good seed in thy field my heart, (Luke viii. 14.) the first part of that blessed work must be to prepare and correct the soil, by rooting out the weeds and thorns of vicious habits and dispositions, which else will choak the work, and make it unfruitful. O sweetest, kindest, dearest Jesus! pour into me, I beg thee, the abundance of thy love, that there may be no remains of earthly or sensual desires or thoughts in my breast, but thou and thy love may reign unrivalled there, and possess my heart entirely. Write thy name in my mind, that thou and thy commands may be ever before my eyes. Kindle in my soul that holy fire which thou hast sent into the world, that it may melt away my dross, and qualify me for offering to thee the daily sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit.

Sweetest Redeemer, as thou hast given me the sincere desire, so give me the attainment of thy chaste and holy love, fervent as my desire, and entire as the sincerity with which I ask it. *Let my head be waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears,* (Jer. ix. 1.) that these may speak for me, and testify the greatness of my love, and the inward delights I feel, too big to be contained within my heart, and perpetually running over in tears of joy.

I frequently call to mind the devout addresses of thy servant *Hannah*, (1 Sam. i.) who came to thy tabernacle to beg a son from thee: and, upon each remembrance of her remarkable piety and perseverance in prayers, I find myself tormented with grief, and confounded with shame, for my own coldness and deadness in devotion. For, if she did not only weep, but continue weeping in hopes of obtaining a son; what affectionate complaints,

what measure of tears become my soul, which comes to thee in prayer, which seeks and loves my God and Saviour, desiring to receive him, and be received to him? What sighs and groanings, what earnest gaspings, what impatient thirstings ought I to bring who am in pursuit of my God day and night, and desire to love and to enjoy nothing but him only? O look then upon me, and extend thy mercy to me, for the *sorrows of my heart are enlarged*: (Ps. xxv. 17.) permit me to taste of thy heavenly comforts, and do not disdain that sinful soul, for which thou didst not grudge to die. Give me plenteousness of tears flowing from an affectionate heart, such as, by lamenting, may prevail for forgiveness of my sins, a release from the bands with which I have so long been tired, and a godly sorrow, which may produce spiritual and heavenly joy. That, if I cannot rise to that exalted pitch of zeal, with some illustrious martyrs and confessors, and eminently devout men, whose bright examples I despair of coming up with; I may however not suffer myself to be outdone by the weaker sex, but be admitted to a share in thy kingdom with devout women.

Another instance of female devotion comes also often into my remembrance: Her, I mean, whose vehement affection for thee put her upon waiting at thy sepulchre; who, though thy disciples went away, would not depart with them, but sat there weeping, and deploring the supposed loss of her dear Lord, and rising frequently returned to search the empty cave with anxious eyes, not trusting her own senses, but hoping and seeking still, in despite of their former reports, to see him whom her soul loved. (Joh. xx.) She had, no doubt, examined the grave with a most nice diligence before; but still her passionate desires could not be satisfied, that she had sought thee with sufficient

care. For that which crowns and recommends every good work, is the virtue of perseverance. This person, then, because she loved more than the rest, and expressed that love by her weeping, and sought thee carefully with tears, and still continued seeking, notwithstanding so many former disappointments, obtained the preference above the rest, and had the honour to find, and see, and converse with thee, before any other person whatsoever.

Not only so, but she was made choice of to be the first preacher of thy glorious resurrection. By her thou didst impart the joyful tidings to thy disconsolate disciples, and refresh their memories with thy promise of visiting them again, saying, *Go tell my brethren, that I go into Galilee, there shall they see me.* (Matt. xxviii. 10.) If then this woman wept so tenderly, who sought *the living among the dead*, and touched thee with the hand of faith, how should that soul be affected, and how lasting ought that affection to be, which believes in the heart, and confesses with the mouth, a glorified Redeemer enthroned in heaven, and reigning over the whole world? What sighs and tears should breathe out from that heart, which loves nothing but thee, and above all things longs to gain a sight of thee: of thee, the only refuge and hope of the miserable, who art never addressed to without a comfortable expectation of mercy?

In this confidence I entreat thee, for thy own sake, and for the glory of thy holy name, to grant me such a tender and affectionate sense of thy goodness, and my own unworthiness, that every time I think, or speak, or read, or write of, upon every remembrance of, every approach to my God and Saviour, in the sacrifices of prayer and praise, my eyes may overflow with tears of remorse and love. Thou, the King of glory, the teacher and pattern of all virtues, hast instructed

us to weep, both by thy word, and by thy own example. Thou hast said, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*: (Mat. v. 4; John xi. 35.) and didst thyself shed tears of compassion for thy deceased friend, and yet more abundantly for the ungracious city of thy people, and its approaching destruction.

By thy most precious tears, (Luke xix. 41.) and by all the wonderful instances of thy mercy for the relief of lost mankind, I beg the grace of tears and godly sorrow, which my soul vehemently thirsts after. I cannot attain to this, unless thou vouchsafe to give it me; for it is thy holy Spirit alone that can bring water out of this rock, and soften the hearts of hardened sinners. This thou hast been pleased to communicate freely to many primitive and eminent saints, whose pious footsteps I dare to tread in. Send down thy former and thy latter rain, and water this dry soil with the dew of heaven, that I may with true compunction bewail my sin and misery; and kindle in my heart a fervent zeal, that I may be a burnt-offering to thee, a sacrifice of sweet savour in thy presence. And let my tears wash that polluted offering, that it may be presented clean and pure. For of these I shall still have daily need; because, though by the assistance of thy grace I consecrate myself never so devoutly and entirely to thy service, yet such is my frailty, that still in *many things* I shall offend. (James iii. 2.) Grant me therefore this necessary grace, that I may taste of thy cup, and quench my thirst, that my soul may ever pant after thee, and burn with the love of thee alone, regardless of any other object, and getting above the vanities of sense, and miseries of the world.

Hear me, my God; hearken, thou light, of my eyes, grant me my request, and grant me to ask such things as thou delightest to give. Let not my manifold offences stop the current of thy

grace, whose property it is to be a *God hearing prayer*, and always to have mercy. But, *according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences, and think upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness.* (Ps. lxxv. 2; li. 1; xxv. 7.)

CHAP. XXXVI.

Another Prayer to the same Purpose.

O GRACIOUS Saviour, O merciful Lord Jesus, who wast pleased to die for our sins, and rise again for our justification, be also pleased, by that glorious resurrection, I beseech thee, good Lord, to raise me from the death of sin, to the life of righteousness; that so partaking now in the first and spiritual, I may be admitted to partake of the blessed and literal resurrection at the last day. (Rom. iv. 25.) Sweetest, kindest, dearest Lord, most mighty King of glory, who hast ascended with great triumph unto thy kingdom, in heaven, and sittest enthroned at the right hand of the Father, draw me up to thee; that by thy powerful guidance, and more than magnetic force, I may run after the odour of thy ointments, and not faint. Draw this thirsty soul to the rivers of eternal pleasure, to the fountain of living water, that I may drink my fill, and live for ever, O God of my life.

They are thy own most comfortable words, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.* (John vii. 37, 38.) O well of life! make good that gracious invitation to thy unworthy servant, that I may continually drink of thee, and quench my eager thirstings, and according to thy most true promise, be so filled with thy holy Spirit, that *out of my belly may flow streams of living water.* O well of life! give me drink out of thy pleasures as out of a river, (Ps. xxxvi. 8.) satiate my soul

with the delights of thy love, that I may lose all relish for vain, and sensual, and worldly joys, and fix my thoughts and desires on thee alone, and on thy sweet mercies; as holy *David* professes of himself, *I remembered thine everlasting judgments, O Lord, and received comfort.* (Ps. cxix. 52.)

Shower down upon me the fructifying graces of thy good Spirit, which thou wert pleased to represent, by the waters promised to be given to them that thirst. (John vii. 39.) Let all my desires and endeavours make up directly to that blissful place, whither we most firmly believe thee to have gone forty days after the resurrection. That nothing but my body may be detained any longer in this valley of misery here below; but my soul and all its faculties may be with thee. That where my best, my only treasure is, my incomparable best-beloved Jesus is, *there my heart may be also.* (Matt. vi. 21.) In the dismal deluge, the wide unfaithful sea of this tempestuous life, we are tossed and driven about by storms that blow from every quarter; without port or shelter; without one spot of dry ground for the weary *dove to rest her foot* upon; (Gen. viii. 9.) no peace, no calm, no security; but rocks and quicksands, wars and contentions, and enemies on every side; *without are fightings, and within are fears.* (2 Cor. vii. 5.)

Thou hast framed us out of a wonderful mixture of different parts, and joined heaven and earth together in one man. *The earthly body presseth down the soul,* (Wisd. ix. 15.) and hence the mind thus unequally coupled is dragged back by its companion, moves heavily and is soon tired with its journey, nay often languishes and sinks down in the middle of its course; is torn and wounded by the thorny cares and vanities through which its way lies; bruised by the roughness of the passage; hungry and hard bestead,

and often ready to perish with thirst, in this dry, barren, desolate wilderness. Nor have I wherewithal to satisfy its cravings, being, alas! poor and destitute of my spiritual comforts. Therefore I flee to thee, my Lord and God, rich in mercies, and a bountiful giver of good gifts; imploring food in my necessity, refreshment for my weariness, balm for my wounds, and guidance for my wanderings. Behold, my soul stands at the door and knocks: O let that *tender mercy of God, whereby* thou glorious *day-spring from on high hath visited us*, (Luke i. 78.) open to this importunate beggar! Extend thy charity, and in a marvellous condescension take him in, that he may find refreshment and sweet repose in thee, and be fed with the bread of life, the bread of heaven: that, thus sustained and strengthened, he may climb up the hill, and, mounting on the wings of holy zeal, may be conveyed from this valley of tears, to the joys of the celestial kingdom.

O that my soul could fly like an eagle, bold and strong, without making any stop, or perching by the way, till it arrive at the beauties of *thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth!* (Ps. xxvi. 8.) That it might feed there at the sumptuous table which thou hast prepared for the citizens of the heavenly *Jerusalem*; and be led forth by its Divine shepherd into pleasant pastures, watered by fruitful streams; (Ps. xxiii. 2.) that so this heart, this tempest-beaten heart, might be brought at last into harbour, laid up and rest secure in thee, my God!

O thou, who *didst command the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm*, (Mat. viii. 26; xiv. 27.) come down and walk upon the waves of my heart, that all its tumultuous passions may be composed into a profound tranquillity! that all may unite into that one of love, and that love be determined upon its own proper object, even thee

my chief, my only good ; that I may contemplate the delight of my eyes, my dear Lord, clearly and without interruption, free from the mists and dusts of trouble and confused thoughts. Let my spirit take sanctuary under the shadow of thy wings, and there be protected from the scorching heats of worldly cares ; that lying close under that shelter it may sing securely with thy holy psalmist, *I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest, for it is thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety.* (Ps. iv. 8.)

Yea, let it take its rest, my God, I pray thee, by having all the remembrance of evils laid to sleep : let it love righteousness, and hate iniquity. For what can be more delightful, more desirable, than in the darkness and distresses of this afflicted gloomy life to look up to, and pant after, the sweet enjoyment of God and everlasting bliss ? Than thither in our minds and affections to ascend, and there continually dwell, where alone true joys are to be found ? O sweetest, dearest, loveliest, and most loving Jesus, when shall I be happy in the sight of thee ? *When shall I come and appear before the presence of my God ?* When shall I be feasted with thy beauty ? When wilt thou *bring my* soul out of this dark loathsome *prison*, into the regions of light, that I may give thanks unto thy name, and taste the bitter cup of grief no more ? When shall I be translated into thy beauteous palace, and hear *the voice of joy and salvation* continually sounding *in the dwellings of the righteous.* (Ps. cxviii. 15.)

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord, they will be always praising thee : (Ps. lxxxiv. 4 ;) *Blessed, indeed, is the man, whom thou choosest and receivest to thyself, and blessed are the people whom thou takest to be thy own inheritance.* (Ps. lxxv. 4. xxxiii. 12.) Behold thy holy ones *grow up before thee as a lily,* (Hos. xiv. 5.) they are filled with the pleasures of *thy house*, and *thou givest them drink out*

of thy fulness: For thou art the fountain of life, and in thy light they see light. (Ps. lxxv. 4; xxxvi. 8, 9.) Such light, that though they are but a derived and secondary light, yet the bright beams of thee, the great original Light, are shed so plentifully upon them, that by virtue of this strong reflection they *shine forth as the sun*, (Matt. xiii. 43.) in thy presence and kingdom. *O how goodly, how amiable, how delicious are the tabernacles of thy dwelling, thou Lord of hosts! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord;* (Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2.) *this sinful heart and flesh crieth out for the living God:* it cries continually, and repeats this profession again and again, *Lord, I have loved the beauties of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.* (Ps. xxvi. 8.)

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. (Ps. xxvii. 4.) *As the hart panteth after the water brook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.* (Ps. xlii. 1.) When shall I see the living God, whom my soul thirsteth after? When shall I see *him in the land of the living?* (Ps. xxvii. 13.) For in this land of the dying, where we now dwell, no mortal eye can see him. What shall I do, wretched man that I am! chained down to flesh and sense, and dragging after me a clog of corruption? What is this miserable condition capable of? *While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord;* (2 Cor. v. 6.) for we *have here no continuing city, but we seek one to come:* (Heb. xiii. 14.) there is our *settlement*, (Phil. iii. 20.) and all our privilege, the hope of our high calling, the business and happiness of our lives, all in our native, in our heavenly country.

Woe is me, that I have so long dwelt in the tents of Kedar, and been constrained to sojourn among the enemies of my peace. (Ps. cxx. 4, 5.) *O that I*

had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest. (Ps. lv. 6.) I know no pleasure comparable to that of being with my Lord. *It is good for me to draw near to God,* (Ps. lxxiii. 28.) to hold me fast *by God.* Grant me, therefore, gracious Lord, so close a union with thee, even while I am imprisoned in this frail body, as to make good the apostle's observation, *he that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.* (1 Cor. vi. 17.) Arm my soul with the wings of contemplation, that it may soar up to thee: and, because my frailty, without thee, cannot but fall, support my soul, that it sink not into the bottom of this dark vale of sense: let not any interposition of the earth eclipse the Sun of righteousness, and obstruct the influence of his refreshing beams; but let his light direct, and his cherishing heat warm, my frozen heart, in my prospects and pursuits of high and heavenly things. For, from this instant I desire to bend my course to the joys of eternal peace, and leaving the clouds and storms of these lower regions of the air, aspire to the quiet and serene, the bright and blissful mansions of ethereal light above.

Hold thou up my heart with thy mighty hand, for without thee it cannot mount upward: I hasten to the place where sweetest and most profound peace reigns undisturbed: O do thou assist and govern my flight, that by thy guidance I may come into those fruitful pastures, where thou feedest *Israel* with eternal truth; that my mind may dwell upon thee, the supreme Wisdom, who penetratest and governest all things. But while I aim at this ascent to thee, I find many objections and obstructions to my design: do thou, I beseech thee, remove and silence them all: command, and the tempest will be still: let my soul possess itself in quietness, and silently pass over all created objects to fix on thee: there, in her

great Creator, let her eyes of faith, her desires, her hopes and thoughts, immoveably rest; and no object ever divert, none entertain her, but her true and chief good, her exquisite and endless joy.

There are, indeed, many contemplations, in which a devout mind feels wonderful satisfaction; but never can it attain to that sweet tranquillity and delight, as when it meditates on thee alone. For, *O how great is thy goodness, and how great is thy beauty!* (Zech. ix. 17.) and how transporting are those secret pleasures which overflow the hearts of thy beloved, who love, and seek, and desire to know nothing but thee! Happy are they who have no other hope: happy, whose constant employment is praying to, and conversing with thee: happy, whose solitude is spent in awful silence, and heavenly raptures, and constant watchfulness over themselves: happy, who, even while in this frail body, anticipate, so far as their condition will allow, the ineffable sweetness of their future glories.

By those life-giving wounds which thou didst condescend for our salvation to suffer on the cross, those wounds, from whence streamed forth that precious blood by which mankind are redeemed from death eternal; wound, I beseech thee, this sinful soul of mine, for which thou didst not disdain to die: strike it through with a fiery dart of thy most fervent love, which nothing can resist: for *the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing the joints and marrow;* (Heb. iv. 12.) strike, therefore, gracious Lord, strike this hard heart of mine to the very quick; and let the waters of penitent and affectionate tears flow out in great abundance. Let me lament my present miseries day and night, and find no comfort till I am allowed to behold my fairest and best beloved spouse, my Lord and my God, in his heavenly bed-chamber. That there,

for ever gazing on thy beauteous face with thy chosen, I may fall down and adore thy Majesty: and, transported with rapturous and inexpressible joy, may cry out with them that love thee—Behold, I see what I have long desired; I am in full possession of my hopes; I am inseparably united to him in heaven, whom upon earth I loved with a most eager and impatient, a most sincere and undivided affection: this is he whom my soul so earnestly panted after, he whom I will praise and bless, and most devoutly adore; he, who liveth and reigneth my God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXXVII.

A Prayer in Time of Affliction.

LOOK down, O Lord, with pity and compassion upon a miserable sinner, doing the things he ought not, and enduring the things which he hath most justly deserved, every day multiplying his offences, and smarting daily under thy correcting rod for them. When I reflect upon my many and great provocations, I cannot but confess my sufferings light and gentle in comparison; and own they do by no means bear proportion to what I have incurred, and might expect. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy judgments.* (Ps. cxix. 137; xcii. 15.) Yea, just and faithful is my God, and *there is no iniquity in him.* Thou sendest affliction, but thou sendest it upon creatures and upon sinners, and canst not therefore be charged with injustice or cruelty. For what is the utmost we groan under? How does this declare thy power, in comparison of ~~that~~ almighty instance of it, which commanded us ~~into~~ being, when we were not? How does this ~~de-~~serve the imputation of rigour, when set ~~again-~~

that infinite mercy, which in wonderful pity redeemed and restored us to happiness and life, when sin had reduced us to a condition so lost and desperate, that even our being was become a curse to us?

I am abundantly convinced, that the events of this life are not left to the rash, uncertain hits of blind chance, but under the steady governance and wise disposal of thy good providence. (Wisd. xi. 24; Mat. vi. 30.) I know thou lovest and takest care of all thy creatures, but more especially thy faithful servants, who repose all their hope and confidence in thy mercy, and in this confidence do cheerfully commit themselves, and all their affairs to thee. In this persuasion I most humbly pray thee, that thou wouldst deal with me not according to my sins, which have made me obnoxious to thy angry justice, but after thy own great mercy, which far exceeds not only mine, but the whole world's offences. And may it please thee, when thou thinkest fit to scourge my outward man, to strengthen my inward with the grace of constancy and unwearied patience: that even in the bitterest anguish of my soul, thy goodness may still be acknowledged most thankfully, and thy praise at no time depart out of my mouth. Pity me, O Lord, and help me, according to what thou seest necessary for me both in body and soul. Thou knowest all things, and canst do all things, and livest for ever, and therefore wilt, I hope, consider my needs and my infirmities, and extend mercy and relief in thy own time, and thy own way, which is always sure to be best and most expedient for us.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

A devout Prayer for Pardon of Sins.

O LORD Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who didst, with hands stretched out upon the cross, submit to drink the bitter cup of sufferings unconceivable, for the redemption of all mankind, vouchsafe to hear and help me this day: behold a wretch in extreme poverty, addressing to the endless treasure of thy rich mercy! O send me not away empty and despised! I come with all the cravings of spiritual hunger; let my soul, I pray thee, be filled with good things; at least deny me not some sustenance.

And, first of all, my dearest Saviour, I freely turn my own accuser, and do so confess against myself all those transgressions and pollutions which render me unworthy of the least of thy mercies. *Behold I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive and bare me:* (Ps. li. 5.) but from this defilement thou hast been pleased to wash and sanctify me. O that I had been as careful to preserve my purity! But with shame I own I have defiled myself anew with more and greater, and more inexcusable sins. Those I was born in, I could not prevent: they were not my fault so much as my misfortune; but the filth I have wallowed in since, was entirely of my own choice and contracting, and the transgressions I am most concerned for, have been in the strictest sense my proper act and deed.

Nay, to add yet more to my confusion, I cannot but call to mind the great advantages of doing better, which thou, according to thy wonted mercy, hast been pleased to afford me. Thou hast separated me from the conversation of sinners, and put into my heart good resolutions of

avoiding their seducements, and following thee; of assembling with the generation of them that seek thy face, and walk in the paths of righteousness; of abandoning a sensual, and devoting myself to a mortified and spiritual and divine life. And I, insensible and ungrateful wretch that I am! in return for such inestimable benefits, have, even since my entrance upon this better course, done many and grievous things against thy holy laws, and my own good intentions! Instead of amending and forsaking my sins, I have added greatly to their number. Thus have I dishonoured my God, and stained and defaced that image of his, in which I was created, with pride and vain-glory, and many other natural deformities, with the dismal prospect of which my poor soul is tormented and afflicted, wounded and destroyed.

Behold, O Lord, *my wickednesses are gone over my head, and are become like a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear.* (Ps. xxxviii. 4.) And unless thou, *whose property is always to spare, and to have mercy,* be pleased to put forth thy hand, and support me from sinking, I shall be irrecoverably lost, and swallowed up in the great deep. Hearken, O Lord, to my cry; look down and behold my misery, how proudly the adversary of souls insults against me, saying, *God hath forsaken him, I will pursue him, and take him, for there is none to deliver him.* But thou, O Lord, *how long wilt thou forget me? Turn, I beseech thee, and deliver my soul; O save me for thy mercies sake.* (Ps. lxxi. 11; vi. 3, 4.) Have compassion on thy child, whom thou hast made such, at the expense of infinite travail and pain, and do not so far remember my wickedness, as to forget thy own goodness. What father is he, that will refuse to rescue his son from destruction? Or, what son is he who never offends, and whom the most affectionate parent chasteneth not with the rod of his love?

Consider, therefore, O my Lord and Father, that though I am a sinner, I am still thy soul, I cannot cease to be so by a double title, for thou art the author and giver, not only of my first and natural, but of my second, my spiritual and better life. Since therefore I have sinned, correct me as thou seest expedient: but when thy corrections have reformed me, deliver me up to thy Son. *Can a mother forget the fruit of her womb?* (Isa. xlix. 15.) Nay, though she should forget, yet thou, our kinder Father, hast declared, that thou wilt not forget thy children. Behold I cry, and thou hearkenest not; I am tormented, and thou comfortest me not. What shall I do, or to whom shall I betake myself, when destitute of my only support, and cast out of the sight of thine eyes? O wretched creature! how great is the happiness from which, how great the misery into which I am fallen! Whither was I going, and whither am I at last come? Where am I, and where am I not? What bliss was I making up to, and what horrors do I groan under? I aimed at peace and joy, but behold perplexity and misery! I die, and my Jesus is not with me; and sure better it were for me not to be at all, than to be without my Jesus; better not to live, than to live without him, who is the very life of my life.

But, O my dearest Jesus, *where are thy tender mercies, and thy loving kindnesses which have been ever of old? Will the Lord keep his anger for ever, and will he be no more intreated?* Be favourable, I beseech thee, and turn not now away thy face from him, for whose redemption thou didst not turn it away heretofore *from shame and spitting.* (Isa. l. 6.) I confess, O Lord, that I am a sinner, a great and grievous sinner: my conscience reproaches me with guilt continually, and sets before mine eyes that hell and damnation, which, I am sadly sensible, are the deserved wages of

my evil doings. I know too no remorse, no repentance of mine can be a sufficient satisfaction to thy offended justice; and therefore I take sanctuary in thy mercy alone; that mercy which can never be overpowered by any greatness, any number of offences. Do not, I beseech thee, most merciful Lord, still write bitter things against me, nor *enter into judgement with thy servant*, but, *according to the multitude of thy mercies blot out all my offences*. (Ps. cxliii. 2; li. 1.) O what will become of me at that dreadful day, when the books of all consciences shall be laid open, and the Judge shall say of me, *This is the man, and these are his works!* What shall I do, or whither shall I flee, when the heavens shall declare my unrighteousness, and the earth shall rise up against, and open her mouth upon me? Alas! I shall not have one word to allege in my own vindication or excuse, no plea to make in bar to sentence passing upon me; but, with a guilty and dejected countenance, stand trembling and amazed before thy judgment seat.

O misery! misery! What shall I say? I will cry unto thee, my Lord and God; for why should I perish, and languish away in silence? and yet if I speak my pains will not be assuaged; and if I hold my peace, I am racked with secret anguish. Mourn, my soul, mourn and weep, like a disconsolate widow, over the husband of thy youth. Howl, wretched thing, and lament, because thy spouse, thy Christ, hath divorced thee in his displeasure. Nay, but, O mighty avenger, do not let loose thine indignation upon me; for it is not in the nature of a mortal to sustain the power of thy wrath. Have mercy, lest I sink in utter despair; and, when my guilty reflections deject me most, let me find some refreshing glance of hope, that I be not quite swallowed up in guilt and confusion. 'Tis true, I have lost that innocence which

should preserve me, and given thee just reason to damn me: but thou hast not, canst not have lost that property, which is used to prevail for the salvation of those who have deserved damnation.

Thou, O Lord, wilt not the death of a sinner, neither hast thou any pleasure in the destruction of him that dieth; so far from that, that thou thyself hast died to the intent that they who before were dead might live. Thy death hath killed the death of sinners, and from that instant thou diest, their life commenced. (2 Cor. v. 15.) Since therefore our living depended upon thy dying, suffer me not, I beseech thee, to die, now thou art restored to life for evermore: but if thy death reconciled me, much more let thy life save me. (Rom. v. 10.) Send down thy hand from above, and deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, let them not triumph over me, neither let them say, We have devoured him. (Ps. cxliv. 7; xxxv. 25.)

Who, blessed Jesus, who can ever suffer himself to distrust thy mercy and goodness, after having reconciled us to God, and ransomed us from hell and death, with thy own dearest blood, even when we were rebels and declared enemies? (Rom. v. 8, 9.) Under the shelter of this mercy I dare approach the throne of grace; and thus protected and encouraged, I run, I call, I cry for pardon, and knock importunately, incessantly, till thou open, and take pity upon me. For if thou didst of thy own mere motion call us to a pardon which we never sought, how shall we not much rather obtain a pardon upon our own request, and that request grounded upon encouragements, and commands, and promises, which thou thyself hast given us?

Look not upon me therefore, sweetest Saviour, in the capacity of a sinner, which would awaken thy justice; but consider me as thy creature, and let that soften and enlarge the bowels of thy

mercy. Remember not thine anger, to which guilt hath made me obnoxious, but remember thy never-failing compassions, of which my misery renders me a fit object. Overlook my pride, which incensed thee, and observe my humility and affliction, which implores thee. And what indeed is *Jesus* but a Saviour? By the importance of thy blessed name, and by all that goodness which so fully answered its most extensive signification, arise, I conjure thee, to *help me*, and *say to my poor soul, I am thy salvation*. (Ps. xxxv. 3.) I entertain very assured expectations of thy bounty, because thou hast taught me to *ask*, and *seek*, and *knock*: (Mat. vii. 7.) And therefore what I do is not an act of bold and rash presumption, but of becoming trust and faithful obedience.

Thou therefore, Lord, who commandest me to *ask*, grant that I may *receive*; thou hast put me upon *seeking*, let me be happy in *finding*; thou hast bidden me *knock*, *open* when I do so; strengthen a weak, restore a lost, raise and quicken a dead wretch; and be graciously pleased to direct and govern my several faculties, senses, thoughts and actions, in doing that which is well-pleasing in thy sight: that, for the future, I may serve thee, live to thee, and entirely devote myself to the obedience of thee. I know, O Lord, the whole of what I am is thy due, as my Creator; I am sensible that more than I am is thy due, as my Redeemer. And, had I it; I should owe thee as much more than I am, as thou, who gavest thyself to be man for my sake, art greater than the man for whom thou wert given. But this poor *self* is all I have to offer in return, and even this I could not offer without thee: Accept me therefore, I beseech thee, and draw me to thyself, that I may from henceforth be thine by imitation and resemblance, by obedience and love, who am already all thy own, as thy creature, and thy pur-

chase. Even thine, O sweetest Saviour, who livest and reignest, for ever and ever, *Amen*.

CHAP. XXXIX.

A useful Prayer.

O LORD God Almighty, three persons, and one substance, eternal and omnipresent, before all, and in all, God blessed for ever ! I consecrate to thy use, and commit into thy custody, this day, and for my whole life, my body and my soul, my sight and hearing, my taste, touch, and smelling ; all my thoughts and affections ; my words and actions ; all without, and all within me ; my sensitive and intellectual faculties, my imagination and memory ; my faith and my perseverance ; beseeching thee in mercy to take charge of them day and night, and guard them safe from all the dangers and temptations which beset me, and attempt to enter at these avenues every hour and moment. Hear me, O blessed holy Trinity, and preserve me from all evil, and all scandal, and especially from all deadly sin. Protect me from the subtle treachery, and violent assaults, and perpetual hostilities of evil spirits, and shield me from the malice of all my enemies, visible and invisible ; and, under thy mighty protection, conduct me safe at last to those blissful mansions, which thou hast prepared for them that love thee, inhabited by patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, confessors and virgins, and all the holy men and women who have walked in thy fear, and done the will of their heavenly Father faithfully from the beginning of the world.

Root out from me, I pray thee, all confident boasting, spiritual pride, arrogance and haughtiness of spirit, and beat down my soul with true compunction for my sins, and a profound unaf-

fectured humility. Open a vent for the tears of repentance; and, when thou hast softened this rock within my breast, let those streams gush out abundantly. (Ps. xci. 3.) Deliver me, O Lord, from the *snare of the hunter*, and give not my soul up a prey to them that seek its ruin, but keep me ever safe and stedfast in the performance of thy will. *Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth thee, for thou art my God.* (Ps. cxliii. 10.) Give me a right judgment and a perfect understanding of Divine truths, that I may have worthy apprehensions of thy unmeasurable goodness. Direct my prayers to thee on all occasions, and let me ask such things as thou delightest to give, and are best for me to receive. Kindle in my heart a holy zeal, such as may incline thy mercy effectually to blot out the remembrance of all my past offences committed against thy Divine majesty. *O Lord, hear; O Lord hearken and do: Defer not for thy own sake, O my God.* (Dan. ix. 19.) If thou rejectest my petitions, *and turnest away thy face, I die*; if thou shewest the light of thy countenance, *I am renewed to life.* (Ps. civ. 29, 30.) If thou regard my righteousness only, this, alas! is no better than filth and pollution, and I shall be on thy account no better than a loathsome carcase. But if thou look upon me in thy mercy, this raises my dead putrifying body from the grave of sin, and breathes into me again a life of righteousness and hope. Remove far from me whatever is odious and offensive to thy pure eyes, and plant in me a spirit of charity and cleanness, that I may *lift up holy hands in prayer*, (1 Tim. ii. 8.) and not bring such a sacrifice as is an abomination to my God. Put away from me all hurtful things, and give me such things as be profitable for me. O thou blessed physician of souls, grant me balm for my wounds, and proper medicines to heal my spiritual diseases. Possess my heart with thy fear,

with meekness and reverence, grant me unfeigned faith, a clean conscience, and a true charity, a tender regard to the good of my brethren; let me never favour or forget my own miscarriages, nor ever be inquisitive after, or severe upon, the faults or failings of other people.

O be gracious and compassionate to my poor soul, to my frailties and transgressions. Visit me in my weakness, heal my sickness, refresh my languishings, and revive me from spiritual death. O that there were in me a heart that might always fear thee, a soul that might always love thee, an understanding that might rightly apprehend and conceive worthily of thee; ears ever open to hear thee; eyes ever fixed and intent to see thee. Have pity upon me, O my God, have pity upon me; and from the throne of thy majesty on high cast down a compassionate look; scatter the thick night of ignorance and error, and enlighten my dark soul with the bright beams of thy holy Spirit. Give me the knowledge of discerning between good and evil; and help me to keep a constant watchful guard over myself; that I may see the things which belong unto my peace, and carefully eschew all those seducements, that would betray me into irrecoverable ruin. Above all, I beg free and full remission of my manifold and grievous sins, of thee, my Lord, who diedst to purchase it; and that, by and through thee I may find effectual propitiation, and comfort, and mercy, in *all time of my tribulation*, and anguish of heart, in all my necessities and distresses, but especially *in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment*. Finally, O Lord, vouchsafe to bestow on me everlasting life, not for any works which I have done, (let them be pardoned only and that is sufficient, reward they cannot deserve) but for thy manifold and great mercy, upon which I throw myself en-

tirely, as the only refuge and hope of sinners and unprofitable servants.

And now, O Lord Jesus Christ, permit, I pray thee, thy unworthy servant to express his charity, by enlarging these petitions, and let them prevail for blessings not only on myself, but others. Grant to all princes and governors, that they may rule thy people in justice and thy fear ; and establish the thrones of them that do so in righteousness and peace. Inspire thy ministers with truth and zeal, that they may agree in a right understanding of thy holy word, and diligently and unanimously prosecute their great work, by setting forth thy glory, and setting forward the salvation of all men. Let thy favour be ever present with thy holy catholic church, and every member of it, men and women, priests and people, all that believe in thee, all that labour in thy love ; increase their graces daily, and enable them faithfully to improve and persevere in every good word and work. Assist all thy servants with such kinds and degrees of thy grace, as are suitable to their respective conditions. Inspire all virgins with chastity and modesty, all persons devoted to thy service with heavenly-mindedness and purity, all married pairs with fidelity and mutual love. To all repenting sinners grant pardon and consolation ; to all widows and orphans, sustenance and relief ; to the helpless and oppressed, protection and justice ; to all travellers, a safe return home ; to all in sorrow and trouble, patience and comfort ; to all who are at sea, their desired port ; and to every one tossed on the waves of this troublesome world, the haven of salvation, and the land of everlasting life. Enable those that are strong, to stand ; help them that are growing in goodness, to prosper and improve daily more and more ; and to all that live in sin, to

wretched me in particular, give the grace of speedy recollection, and effectual amendment.

For, O sweetest and most merciful Jesus, Son of the living God, and Saviour of the world! I acknowledge myself a most unworthy, most miserable sinner; but thou, O father of mercies, who hast compassion upon all, wilt not suffer me to perish, nor cast me utterly out of thy sight: had that been thy intention, thou wouldst have cut me off in the midst of my wickedness, and not have allowed me space or disposition to repent. Since, therefore, thou art pleased still to forbear punishment, and to grant me a truce, give me a heart, as thou hast given me opportunities, to make my peace with thee. Influence my mind powerfully, that I may seek, and desire, and love thee above all things, and fear above all to offend thee, and be careful constantly to please thee.

Lastly, O God, and Father, blessed for ever, I intreat thee for all them who make charitable mention of me in their prayers, and all who have desired to be recommended to thy favour, in those of the least and most unworthy of thy servants: for all who have done me any good offices, or are in any degree related to me, that thou wouldst hear them for me, and me for them; and according to thy bounteous mercy, preserve and govern them, and return all their kindness and charity sevenfold into their bosom. That thou wouldst impart liberally to all, who are yet engaged in their Christian warfare, the succours of thy grace; and, in thy own good time, to all who have happily finished their course, the consummation of reward and glory. And, O thou, who art *Alpha* and *Omega*, *the beginning and end*, once more I repeat that most important request, that, when the time appointed for my great change shall come, thou wilt in mercy stand by me at my last hours; strengthen me in my great conflict, sup-

port me in my dying agonies, pluck me out of the jaws of the ravening wolf, who will then stand ready to seize and devour me; defend me from his terrors and accusations, and take me for thy own: so shall I be received into the blessed company of saints and angels, in thy heavenly paradise, there to rejoice, and live, and reign with thee for ever, who art over all, God blessed for ever, *Amen*, sweet Jesus, *Amen*.

CHAP. XL.

Devout Reflections upon the Sufferings of Christ.

O LORD Jesus Christ, who art *made unto me of God* redemption, and mercy, and salvation! I praise thee, I bless thee, I render thanks to thee, but thanks that do by no means bear proportion to the inestimable benefits for which they are due; thanks, wretchedly defective in their zeal and devotion, which ought to warm this frozen heart of mine upon every remembrance of thee: not such as I am sensible I owe, but yet the best my soul can with its utmost efforts reach up to. Thou hope of my heart, and strength of my soul, let thy power supply what my weakness cannot attain to: thy fervent love make up for my lukewarm affection: for though I have not yet been able to love thee so much as I ought, yet, if sincerity can be accepted instead of perfection, my conscience supports me with this testimony, that I desire, however, and wish with all my soul, that I were able to love thee as much as I ought to do.

O Light shed from above into my soul, from whom no secrets are hid! Thou seest my inward parts, and art conscious to all my desires. If any good be there, 'tis of thy inspiring: if this of loving thee be (nay, because I am sure it is) good, and

from thee, enable me to perform that which thou hast made me to desire, and grant that I may love thee to a degree as exalted as thou requirest. I offer to thee thanks and praises; let not that gift be barren, and produce no worthy fruit in me which thou hast of thy own free grace communicated; but crown and perfect thine own work: and as thy goodness first prevented me with holy desires, moved by no deserts of mine, so, I beseech thee, continue the same grace, in granting those desires their just accomplishment: awaken my stupidity, quicken my deadness, and change my cold indifference into a most sensible and fervent zeal; for this is the aim and end of all my prayers, this is the proper effect of all my reflections upon thee and all thy benefits, that the more I converse with thee, and the oftener I remember thee, the more vehemently I may love thee.

It was thy goodness, O Lord, that created me at first: It was thy mercy that, when I was created, cleansed me from the stain of original sin: it was thy power which preserved me after the sanctification of baptism: it was thy clemency, thy bounty, thy long suffering, which, notwithstanding my numberless actual provocations since, hath forborn, sustained, and waited for my amendment. Thou, Lord, hast long expected the return of thy prodigal child; and I, but not, alas! with equal carefulness, wait for the inspiration of thy grace, to work in me repentance and holiness of life. My God, my Maker, thou that sparest me, thou that sustainest me, I hunger and thirst after thee, I gasp for and pant after thee; and as a darling, but a desolate child debarred of his most indulgent father's presence, weeps and laments incessantly, and thinks of, and longs for nothing but his beloved company, and wears the image of his face perpetually in his heart; so I am moved by the

tenderest impressions, and with an eager impatience lament my distance from thee. I often think upon, and am very sensibly affected, though not so sensibly as I wish and ought to be, with thy sorrows and sufferings, thy buffetings and scourges, thy reproaches and revilings, thy wounds and expiring agonies; how thou wert killed and crucified, how thou wert embalmed and buried, and withal, how gloriously thou didst rise again, and how triumphantly ascended up into heaven; and all this for me, sinful man, and for my salvation. These things I believe with a most stedfast faith; and in virtue of that persuasion I bewail the miseries of my pilgrimage and exile from thee: I propose no other comfort to myself, comparable to that of my Lord's return to me, and do most ardently desire, as the sum and source of all my happiness, to see thy beauteous face for ever in thy glory.

Say, my soul, if thou canst, how thou shouldst have been affected, hadst thou seen this Lord in person; seen the King of angels emptying himself of majesty, and condescending to converse with men, that men might be exalted to live and converse with angels; seen thy offended God die, to reconcile vile offenders to himself, and so prevent their everlasting death. O what expressions, what conceptions, what wonder can be great enough for this unparalleled, this amazing love and goodness! But draw a little nearer yet, my soul, and take a more distinct view of this tragical, this astonishing scene. Couldst thou have seen thy dearest Saviour's side pierced with a spear, and would not the same weapon have pierced through thy own heart also? Couldst thou have stood by and beheld the hands and feet of him that created thee torn with nails, and fastened to the cross, and the blood which redeemed thee gushing out in streams, and not have

sunk thyself, and even expired with grief and horror at the sight?

Say then withal, (but that thou canst not say) why thou dost now read, and hear and meditate upon these things, which when seen by the eye of faith, are as certain as if present to that of the body, with so slender impression and concern: why dost not thou drink up the bitter cup of tears, since thy Jesus did for thee drink that of his Father's wrath? Why dost thou not feel a grief too deep to be described, like that of his virgin-mother, when she saw her innocent and only son bound and scourged, tortured and slain before her face; since the relation here too is most close and dear, and, as thy Lord was her's, so art thou the Lord's flesh and bones, a member of that body, whereof he is the head?

Had I, with holy *Joseph*, taken my Lord down from the cross, wrapped him in spices, and laid him in the sepulchre, how happy should I have really esteemed myself, that any officious respect of mine had contributed to the honour of his interment? What glad astonishment should I have felt, had I been in company with those zealous women who were affrighted with a vision of angels, and heard that comfortable, that reviving message, *Fear not ye; ye seek Jesus which was crucified: he is not here, for he is risen.* (Mat. xxviii. 5, 6.) These, dearest Lord, were moving objects, which thy providence did not think fit to give me a bodily sight of, but I behold them all by a distinct and undoubted faith. I see the pledges and memorials of them daily in thy blessed sacraments: and though I was not allowed to kiss thy scars, and drop my tears into the print of the spear and nails, yet, as oft as I approach thy table with deep remorse and due reverence, I there weep over thy crucified body, there contemplate the pangs of thy bitter death, there rejoice in the triumphs of

thy resurrection, there receive the effectual representation of all thou hast done and suffered for me ; and, by a holy union with thee and all thy members, attain a greater privilege than any conversation with thee in the days of thy flesh could have conferred. Thou art to all intents the same Saviour, and if they that saw thee were blessed, because they believed, yet thy own mouth declared them no less *blessed who have not seen, and yet have believed.* (John xx. 29.)

But still the sight of thee, of thy beauties, and thy glory, is the constant desire, the only end, and noble reward of our faith ; and, in this clouded disconsolate interval, till that can be obtained, my soul finds itself frequently at a loss how to express itself, what to do, whither to bend its course, or where to find its much-loved Lord. Who shall tell my spouse how I languish for him ; how my joy is turned into heaviness, and my laughter into mourning, for want of his dear presence ? *My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.* (Ps. lxxiii. 26.) My soul refuseth comfort from an other hand but thine, my joy and treasure ; for, *whom have I in heaven, but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* (Ps. lxxiii. 25). Thou hast commanded me to seek thy face, and my heart most readily replies, *Thy face, Lord, will I seek ; O turn not thou thy face from me, nor cast away thy servant in displeasure.* (Ps. xxvii. 8, 9.)

O most affectionate lover of souls, *the poor committeth himself unto thee, and thou art the helper of the fatherless.* (Ps. x. 14.) O my most faithful guardian preserve and pity me ; I am an orphan destitute of friends, and my soul is in a state of poverty and widowhood. Look upon the tears I shed for thy absence in this desolate condition ; and come, Lord Jesus, come unto me quickly, that I may be comforted ; shew me thy face, and I shall be satis-

fied: discover thy glory, and my joy shall be full : my flesh and my soul thirst and pant for thee, the living God, the fountain of life, *O when shall I come and appear before God?* (Ps. xlii. 1, 2.)

When will my comforter, whom I so earnestly look for, make his approaches to me? When, O when shall I feel the joy I so passionately desire, and be filled with the pleasures of that glorious dwelling, which I hope to reach at the end of this wearisome journey of life? Lord, if I may not yet drink of *the river of thy pleasures*, let me at least drink of *the brook in the way*. Let my tears be my meat and drink day and night, till the dawn of that glorious morning, when my soul should be awakened with that most welcome call, *Behold thy spouse, thy Lord, the marriage of the Lamb is come*. (Ps. lxxv. 9; cx. 7; Rev. xix. 7.) All I presume to ask at present is refreshment and support under my sorrows; and, that these may be such as will one day be turned into joy; for I know my Redeemer will come, because he is merciful and true; nor will he suspend my happiness by unnecessary delay, because he *loves those that love him, and they that seek him early shall be sure to find him*. (Prov. viii. 17.) To whom therefore be glory and praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

End of the First Book of Meditations.

OF
THE LOVE OF GOD.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

Love, the Way that leadeth to Life.

BY what means we may avoid the torments of hell, and attain the joys of heaven, is an enquiry which deserves our most attentive application of thought; a science to be learnt at the expense of our most watchful care, and most solicitous concern. And in this study, 'tis of great consequence to set out right; for all our most assiduous endeavours will be employed to very little purpose, if we be not first instructed what way it is that leads to everlasting bliss, and carries us out from all danger of everlasting misery. 'Twill therefore behove us very diligently to consider those words of the apostle, in 1 Cor. ii. 9. which, taken in their just latitude, do plainly teach us these *two* things: first, that the glories of the blessed, in a future state, are greater than can be expressed; and then, secondly, what is the way, by which we must arrive at this blessedness. *Eye, he says, hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* (1 Cor. ii. 9.) Now when he tells us that these excellent things are prepared for *them that love* God, from thence the inference is natural

and plain, that love is the condition enjoined, in order to the obtaining them. But then the scripture makes it no less evident, that the love of God, and the love of our neighbour, are virtues, inseparable from each other. For thus much is the importance of that passage in *St. John*, *He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.* (1 John iv. 20, 21.) In these two parts it seems that true charity consists, to which *St. Paul* hath given so glorious a character, when he shuts up his discourse of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit with those remarkable words, *And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.* (1 Cor. xii. 31.) Charity then is not only the way, but the best, nay, the only way, that leads to our heavenly country; for 'tis impossible for any man ever to come thither by any other way. But who is it that knows, or walks in this way? Even he that loves God and his brother. It will concern us then to be perfectly well informed what are the proper expressions of our love to each, and the just measures of our affection to God and to our neighbour. And of this point it may suffice to say, that we are bound in duty to love God *more than ourselves*, and to love our neighbour *as ourselves*. Now we love God more than ourselves, when upon all occasions we prefer his will before our own, and suffer no private interest or sensual inclination to come in competition with his commands, and his honour. But it is very observable, that although we are enjoined to love our neighbour *as ourselves*, yet we are no where enjoined to love him *as much as we do ourselves*; and therefore our duty in this respect is satisfied, when we heartily wish and endeavour all that good to our neighbour, which we ought to wish and endeavour the attainment

of ourselves, especially the everlasting happiness of the soul; when we contribute to his obtaining it, and omit no instance, whereby our help may be of any use to him, in procuring any advantage, whether temporal or spiritual, so far as the present circumstances of affairs render our assistance seasonable, and our own condition puts it in our power to become serviceable to him. This explication agrees exactly with the equity of our Lord's rule, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.* (Mat. vii. 12.) And it shews us likewise the necessity of that other left us by St. John, *Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.* (1 John iii. 18.) But it may be asked once more, who those neighbours are whom we are bound to love after this manner? And to this the answer is very short, that the command is of unlimited extent, and comprehends all mankind; whether they be Christians, Jews, or infidels; whether they be acquaintances or strangers; whether they be friends or enemies.

CHAP. II.

*Upon what accounts, and in what manner,
we ought to love God.*

BUT in regard this duty is of such infinite consequence, and that the whole of our hopes and happiness depends upon the due performance of it, it is very necessary that we consider diligently what are the grounds of this obligation, and by what means it may be discharged. Now nothing will conduce to the begetting, cherishing, and heightening in our minds a holy love towards God, so much as a frequent recollection and just estimate of his wonderful goodness, and innumerable benefits to us: for indeed, the blessings he gives us of his own mere motion are so many

and so great, and the recompense he makes us in return for any services we pay him, is so exceeding disproportionate to what we have reason to expect, that our souls must of necessity be at a loss, and perfectly confounded with amazement at the number and the value of the favours we receive at his hands. But though these are so inestimably great, that 'tis impossible for us to make such a return of love and thanks and obedience as they deserve, yet sure it is, we are bound to make the best we can, and by our diligence to pay to the utmost of our ability, remembering that the vast arrear behind stands still charged to account, not from any want of will, but merely from the want of power to clear so great a debt. And thus, my soul, thou hast an answer to the first inquiry propounded in this chapter, which was concerning the ground of this duty. For therefore is our Lord to be most affectionately loved by us, because he is so wonderfully compassionate and tender, so kind and bountiful, and poureth out his benefits upon us in such abundance: and all this not from any manner of desert or worth in us, that might engage his favour, but of his own goodwill and mere motion; of which we are able to render no other reason, but only this, that *he will have mercy, because he delights in, and will have mercy.*

The other, *how this God is to be loved*, that command which enjoins the duty makes sufficiently plain. And what a strict observance of this command is required from us, we may easily infer from the terms in which it is expressed, and the solemnity used in laying it upon us. Hear then, O man, the *first and great commandment*; hearken to it attentively, remember it exactly, meditate upon it incessantly, and use thy very utmost efforts to fulfil it without delay, without intermission, without end, or ever supposing thou hast

done so much, that thou art at liberty to desist from any fresh instances of thy regard to it. All this is implied in that awakening preface, by which God introduces it: *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord.* (Deut. vi. 4.) Now the command itself runs thus, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.* (Matt. xxii. 37.) Which is as much as to say, that our intellectual faculties, the understanding, the will, and the memory, should all be fixed on this, as on their best and proper object; that God should be the subject of our study: that he should preside over all our inclinations, be the ultimate end of all our desires, dwell always present in our thoughts, and reign supreme, as the governing principle of all our actions. In a word, that we should contemplate, and chuse, and remember, and reverence him above all, and make it our business to live to him alone.

How men come so easily to satisfy themselves with being so extremely negligent in this most necessary branch of their obedience, is very difficult to conceive; except it be from hence, that wanting a due sense of the greatness of God's love, they proportion their regard to him according to their own scanty notions of his goodness toward them. And therefore, for prevention of this fault in thee, do thou, my soul, attend with reverence, and thankfully recollect the innumerable benefits which he hath bestowed upon thee; the many precious promises he hath made thee: and then I doubt not but what thou hast already, and what thou art warranted to hope for hereafter, will sufficiently convince thee, that thou art under the highest obligations to love God with a most fervent and entire affection. Now, in order to exercise and increase this love the more effectually, begin thy considerations where God

began the expressions of his goodness, and think seriously with thyself, by whom, upon what motive, and to what purpose man was created, and what things God was pleased to create besides, for the sake and service of men.

First, then, we must understand, that there is but one cause which produced all created beings, whether they be things in heaven, or things on earth, whether they be visible or invisible. That this sole, this universal cause, was no other than the goodness of their Creator, who is the one true God; whose essential goodness is so large, and so communicative, that he was pleased to make others partakers of that blessedness, which he enjoys from and to all eternity, and which he saw capable of being imparted, without any possibility of suffering diminution by being thus diffused. That good therefore, which is his very nature, and wherein his own happiness consists, he did thus shew abroad, not by necessity, but free choice, because 'tis the property of the supreme Good to will the good of others, and the excellence of supreme Power to exert itself, not to the prejudice, but the benefit of all that are subject to it. Now, because this blessedness of God cannot be any otherwise partaken of, but by being understood; and the more perfectly it is understood, the more plentifully it is imparted; God was pleased to make rational creatures, and to give to such a capacity of understanding the supreme Good, of having what they thus understood, of possessing this best object of their love, and of enjoying what they so possessed. This rational part of the creation is so ordered, that part of it retains its essential purity, without being united to any bodily substance: and such are the angels; another part there is joined to the body, and such is the soul of man. Rational creatures then, are either incorporeal or corporeal: the incorporeal are angels, for

these are simple spirits. The corporeal are men, so called, because the human nature consists not only of a reasonable soul, but also of a fleshy body. So then, that the rational creature had any, and that it had particularly this kind of existence, is to be imputed wholly to the goodness of Almighty God, as its original impulsive cause. Men then and angels, both were created by the goodness of God; for we therefore are at all, because God is good, and the whole of that being we receive from God, is good. But to what purpose were these rational creatures made? Surely to praise God, and to love him, and to enjoy him; in all which not the Creator's, but the creature's, advantage is consulted; for God is absolutely perfect and happy in himself, and cannot receive either addition or diminution from any of the works of his own hands. The only uses then that can be served by making such creatures as these, and the only account that can be given why they were made at all, must be the illustration of the Creator's goodness, and the promoting of the creature's happiness. When therefore the question is asked, why, or to what end rational creatures were made? the true answer undoubtedly is this, that they were made because God was good, and to the intent they might be happy: for, what can conduce to their happiness so much as to serve him, and to enjoy him?

CHAP. III.

How God made all Things for Man.

WHEN God is said to have made angels or men for himself, we must not so mistake this expression, as fondly to imagine, that he who made both had any need of either; or, that the acknowledgments and services, which he gave them a capacity of paying, are any addition to the

fulness of his bliss and glory. For, how unworthily should we conceive of our Creator's majesty, by thinking that any thing which we call ours, or is most valuable in us, could increase or take away from his blessedness? No, he made us to serve him, but it was because his service is freedom, is an honour; and to be such subjects is to be truly kings. This service redounds wholly to the profit of him that pays it, but not at all to his, to whom it is paid. And, as God made man for himself, so did he likewise make the world for man; that is, so as to minister to man's use and comfort. Man then is placed in a middle and subordinate station, so as to be under authority himself, yet to have servants under him too; and thus all things are most admirably contrived to our advantage, when both the homage we pay, and that which is paid to us, flows into one common channel, and all unites at last in our advantage, as in its proper centre. God will be served by man, for this reason, that not he, but man may reap the benefit of that service: again, God will have man served by the world, that by this service also man may be the gainer. So that we may with due reverence say, that the whole design of the creation, and every part of it, may be at last reduced to the happiness of man; since both that which was made for him, and that for which himself was made, do mutually conspire to make him happy. Thus *all things*, as the apostle says, *are ours*; (1 Cor. iii. 21.) whether they be things above us, or upon a level with us, or below us. The things above us are for our enjoyment, and such is God. Those on the level with us are for our society, and such are angels, whom I presume to call our equals, not only with regard to the same rational nature, but chiefly in prospect of our future state: for we are assured, that however they are now in several respects superior to us,

yet in the next world the children of the resurrection shall be *as they are*, (Matt. xxii. 30.) and shall live with them forever in heaven. The things below us are likewise ours ; for we have the use and convenience of them, as the masters goods are, in a true but qualified sense, said to be their servants. Not that this gives them a property exclusive of their masters, but extends the benefit and the privilege of using them. Nay, even the angels, in some passages of scripture, are said to do us service : nor did the apostle think it any disparagement to their character and dignity, when he called them *all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation*. (Heb. i. 14.) A very great honour this, but such as we ought not to make any difficulty of believing to be done to us, when we reflect upon that so much more astonishing condescension of the Creator, and King of angels, who describes the end of his coming into the world in those very humble terms, that *he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*. (Matt. xx. 28.) The angels are said to offer up prayers to God. Not that they instruct him what we do, or what we ask ; for he knows all things exactly as they are, even before they are : and therefore cannot possibly be ignorant of them afterwards. But they attend his pleasure upon these occasions, execute his orders, and what they know God had decreed, are sometimes instruments of accomplishing, and sometimes messengers too to give the parties concerned notice of. Thus the angel tells *Tobias*, that he *brought the remembrance of his prayers before the Holy One*, and that there are some spirits, whose office it is *to present the prayers of the saints, and to go in and out before the throne of God*. (Tob. xii. 15.) And all this in a sense very agreeable to what we do when we pray. For neither is this religious exercise designed to

inform God of our wishes or our wants; but it is necessary, that reasonable creatures should refer all their temporal occasions to the judgment and disposal of eternal Truth: either by asking what they think fit to be done for them, or by desiring to know what he sees fit to be done with them, and by them. So that a principle of marvellous charity invites the holy angels from their mansions of bliss in heaven, that they may suggest good counsel in our difficulties, that they may visit and comfort us in our distresses and suffering, and that they may succour us in our conflicts and dangers. All which good offices they perform with the greatest cheerfulness and vigilance imaginable; upon God's, upon ours, and upon their own account. Upon God's, because they love and admire that reverence of their own excellences, which appear in our nature; and upon their own, because they hope and wish to see their numbers recruited by the spirits of just men made perfect, and received into the place of the fallen angels.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Love of God towards us.

FIRST, then, it is necessary that every man should take a distinct view of himself, and when he is arrived at a due understanding of the honourable post God hath placed him in, that he be careful not to dishonour himself, nor injure his Maker, by settling his affections upon things that are below, or unworthy of his character. For objects, which considered singly and separately, may appear beautiful and lovely, do yet deservedly sink in esteem, when compared with others confessedly more excellent. It argues great folly to put things manifestly deformed and vile, upon

the level with such as are amiable and handsome ; and is it a point of wisdom to raise those which have a noble and real excellence, and neither depending upon mere fancy nor of the meanest rank of beauties, to an equal degree with the highest and most eminently good ? Consider then, my soul, what excellences thou art endued with, and from hence take thy measures, what excellences those are that deserve thy love. Now, if through negligence, or long disuse of the most exalted objects, thy eyes are so far blinded, that thou canst not entertain such lofty ideas of thy own condition, as the case requires ; yet thus far at least conquer thy own prejudices, as to learn to make a just estimate of thyself, by the judgment which another hath made of thee. And for this thou canst not want opportunity, because the matter is so plain, as to give thee sufficient direction. Thou hast a lord and spouse, but how exquisitely beautiful, as yet thou dost not perfectly know, because thou hast not seen his face. He sees and knows thee thoroughly : for had he not done so, he would not love thee. He hath not thought fit hitherto to present himself to thee, but he hath made thee many noble presents ; and given such pledges of his kindness, as might at once be both assurances and signs, who it is, that hath betrothed thee to himself, and how exceeding tender that affection is, which moved him to this union. Couldst thou behold his charms, there could be no longer ground of doubt. For thou wouldst be convinced, that one so fair, so heavenly sweet, one of such matchless excellence, could not be smitten with thee, were there not in thy form somewhat very graceful, very uncommon, to recommend thee, and engage his love. But in the mean while, how dost thou behave thyself upon this occasion ? See him face to face thou canst not, because he is absent ; and is

this a sufficient reason for not paying him reverence, for insolently and shamelessly affronting him, for slighting that love which thou canst not but see, and impudently prostituting thyself to the lust of seducing strangers? O do not treat him after this contemptuous manner! If thou canst not as yet know all the charms of thy lover, yet thou canst understand the valuable instances of his love. These are already actually in thy possession; and if considered as they ought, will plainly shew thee, what returns of love it becomes thee to make, and how extremely solicitous thou oughtest to be, not to displease, not to despise, not to lose him or his favour. The pledge he hath given thee is most extraordinary: a noble gift suited to the majesty of the Giver. And, as it was below so great a person to bestow a thing of little value; so were it no less unbecoming so wise a person, to throw away things of the highest value upon one in whom there was little or nothing valuable. Great therefore is the present he hath made, but greater still in his esteem is that which he loves in thee, and which induced him to give it.

But thou perhaps wilt ask, my soul, what this great gift is, which thy spouse hath shewed himself so very bountiful, in bestowing upon thee. Look round this universe, view every part of it, and tell me if thou canst there discover any thing which does not some way or other do thee service. Is not this the end to which every creature seems to have been designed? And does not the whole course of nature plainly promote it? The gratifying thy desires, the bringing in thy profit, the supply of thy wants, the furnishing store for thy comfort and delights, the doing all this in great abundance, and consulting not barely thy necessities, but even thy ease and pleasure. This is what the heavens, the earth, the air, the sea, and all the

inhabitants and products of each of them, are with a continual and most officious diligence employed about. The regular revolutions of time, the various seasons of the year, the stated successions of night and day, by which the world dies and revives, grows old and young again; its fabric ruined and repaired, its provisions consumed and recruited; all is contrived so admirably for thy purpose, that, as none of these vicissitudes are useless, so one cannot conceive how any of them could be spared without some manifest, some insupportable inconvenience. This I suppose thee sensible of; but art thou not sensible at the same time who it is that framed and contrived this wonderful order, and disposed every part so advantageously, that whatever discord appears between each other, yet are all unanimous in promoting the common design; and conspire to do thee service? How brutish is it to feed upon the benefit, and remain ignorant of thy Benefactor? The gift is evident, and is the Giver a secret? Nay, thy own reason will not allow thee in vain an imagination, as, that these advantages are upon any account thy due, or of thy own procuring, but loudly tells thee thou owest them all to the liberality of another. Now be that who it will, to whose bounty thou art so largely indebted, 'tis plain he hath given us much; and no less plain, that he, who gave so much, would not have done it, had he not loved much. So the greatness of his affection, and the indispensable obligation to ours in return are both of them demonstrable from the quality of his gift. Now how extravagantly foolish is it not to desire the true love of one, who hath it in his power to be so excellent a friend? Not to do it of our own accord, and in regard to our interest, though there were no antecedent obligation? But how impious, how perverse, how base, not to love him in return, who hath

been so inexpressibly kind to us? If then thou lovest other things besides, do it with such limitations as are proper; maintain thy character, and remember theirs; love them as things below thee; as those that were made to do thee service, as tokens of thy spouse's love, the gift of a friend, the bounty of a master; but be sure never to forget whose goodness all these blessings are owing to, and therefore be not fond of them, for their own sake; but for his sake who bestowed them: nor let them divide thy affections with the Donor, for to take them into thy heart together with him, is a wrong and great indignity; and therefore they must be loved for him, but he by and for them, and infinitely above them *all*.

CHAP. V.

Of the Fruition of God.

TAKE heed, my soul, that thou incur not the reproach of a harlot, by doing like those common prostitutes, who have no principle but profit, and value the price of the gift much more than the affection of the giver. Thou canst not be guilty of a more infamous, of a more injurious affront, than to accept and live upon his presents, and not to return his love. Consider well the value of what thou hast received; or, if thou art not, as indeed thou art not able, truly to estimate the greatness of his bounty, consider however the advantage of loving him in return. Love him for his own sake; love thyself for his sake; love him that thou mayest enjoy and be happy in him; love thyself that he may love thee. Love him in the good things he hath bestowed upon thee, love him for thy own sake, and thyself for his sake. This is pure and chaste love, debased with no sordid interest, embittered with no torment, but delight-

ful and generous, firm and lasting. Think, and recollect diligently, my soul, what mercies thou hast received in common with all mankind, what special marks of favour, of which all are not allowed to partake, what others, which are peculiar to thyself alone. He hath loved thee in common with all thy fellow-creatures ; he hath distinguished thee from many of them by singular blessings ; he hath shewed the same affection to thee with all good men ; he hath preferred thee before all evil men ; and if the being preferred before the evil seem a small thing, reflect farther, how very many good men there are, whose blessings yet are come far short of thine.

CHAP. VI.

The Mercies of Creation and Regeneration.

FIRST then, my soul, remember that there was a time that thou wert not at all ; and, that thou ever didst begin to be, is the free gift of God. Thy very being then is an instance of his bounty. But was it possible, that before thou hadst a being, thou shouldst give any thing to God, which could oblige him to give thee that being, by way of recompense for any former kindness on thy part. No certainly, 'tis manifest thou didst not, couldst not deserve any thing at his hands, while thou thyself as yet wert not any thing. Had then his liberality stopped there, and given thee being only ; yet this single blessing is great enough to challenge thy continual praise and love. But he hath given thee a great deal more than bare existence ; by making thee a beautiful and glorious creature. Nor did the munificence of this noble benefactor content itself with an inferior degree of beauty, for he hath wrought thee up to the highest perfection, and

formed thee into a resemblance of his own Divine excellences. Thus hath he drawn those hearts to him by a likeness of nature, which he had attracted by the engagements of his love. He gave us being, beauty, and life: that by existence we might excel those things that are not; by our form, those that are rude, unfinished, or deformed; and by our life, those things that are inanimate. How deeply then art thou indebted, O my soul, to him, from whom thou hast received much, when yet thou hadst nothing of thy own, and having nothing of thy own, hast nothing in thy power to make a requital with, but only to love him, who gave thee all thou hast? For in recompense of that which was given thee, out of pure love, thou canst not make any less, thou canst not make any greater return, than that of loving again. And evident it is, that there could not be any other inducement for bestowing all these benefits, but the free love of God alone.

But now I will open another and more amazing scene of kindness, by shewing thee, how low this Lord and spouse of thine, whose majesty shone so gloriously bright in thy creation, was pleased to condescend in the work of thy regeneration. In the former he appeared so high and noble, in the latter so little and so humble, that it is not easy to determine, whether of these two extremes is a more worthy subject of thy wonder and praise. In the former his power was illustrious, who conferred such glorious privileges upon thee; in the latter, his mercy was no less illustrious, who submitted to endure such bitter things for thee: that he might raise thee up from the depth of misery, into which thou hadst sunk thyself, himself vouchsafed to descend into the same pit, where thou layest grovelling and unable to help thyself: and, the misery which thou didst then sustain, he was content in pity to un-

dergo, that a way might be made for justice to be satisfied with the restitution of the happiness thou hadst lost. He came down, he took upon himself, he endured, he vanquished, he restored. He came down from the throne of God to wretched mortals: he took upon himself mortality, he endured affliction, and pain, and ignominy; he vanquished death, he restored mankind. Stand still, my soul, and with holy astonishment gaze on the series of wonders, this inestimable complication of mercies; consider the greatness of his love, who did not grudge to do so much for thee: he made thee beautiful at first, but thou hast sullied and deformed thyself by sin. Notwithstanding this dishonour done to the charms thou hadst received from him, thy stains are washed away, and the purity of thy former complexion renewed again, by his marvellous compassion. Thus was his love the sole cause, both of the gift at first, and of its restitution. When thou hadst no being, his love created thee: when thou hadst defaced his glorious image, his love refreshed the impression: and to demonstrate how exceedingly he loved thee, he willingly delivered thee from death, when that could be done at no less expense, than the laying down his own life. He would not do it at a cheaper rate, that so the price might demonstrate the vehemence of his affection, no less than the value of the advantages purchased with it. A mighty favour no doubt it was, that the first man received from his merciful Creator, when the *breath of life was breathed into him, and he became a living soul, like the God who made him.* (Gen. i. 26; ii. 7.) But how much greater was the condescension, how much more valuable the blessing, when for the man that he had made, God afterwards gave himself? I acknowledge it a great thing, that I am God's handy-work, and own the gratitude due upon this account; but sure a great

deal more is due, when I consider, that God was pleased to make himself my ransom. For thus there is so much expended upon our redemption, as might almost incline us to believe, that man is a valuable consideration for even God himself. O how strangely hath light sprung out of darkness ! How happy an event was my guilt attended with, for the purging whereof, while this love of my Saviour disposes him, that love is opened to my desires, and if I do but give him my heart, I am secure of an easy access to, and a sure place in his. Had my misery and danger been less, I never could have had so noble a proof of his kindness. Have I not reason then in some respect to bless that fall, from which I rise with greater advantage, than if I had not fallen at all ? No kindness could be more, none more sincere, more chaste, more fervent, more passionately expressed, than that of an innocent person, dying for me, who had no commendation to deserve, none to engage his love. What was it then, my dearest Lord, that thou didst love in me ? What that thou lovest so much, as even to die for me ? What couldst thou find in this poor wretched creature, worth doing so many miracles of goodness, worth suffering so many injuries and agonies for ; I am perfectly amazed at this stupendous dispensation ; and, the more I consider either thee or myself, the less I find myself able to account *for it*.

CHAP. VII.

The Mercy of being called to the true Faith.

THE merit and sufficiency of this redemption extend to all mankind, but the means ordinarily necessary to render it effectual are not distributed with an even hand. Here then, my soul, observe and be thankful for a discrimination ma-

nifestly in thy favour. For how numerous, and of what condition, if compared to thee, are those many, who have not the precious opportunities of that grace which are allowed to thee? Thou canst not but have heard how many generations of men, from the beginning of the world down to this very day, have lived and died without the knowledge of the true God; how many more did formerly, how many even now perish eternally, and never heard one syllable of a redemption purchased by the blood of God. All these thy Saviour hath distinguished thee above, and signalized his love in granting those means of grace, which none of them were thought worthy to partake of. They were left in their ignorance, and thou art taken to be made wise unto salvation. But for this difference there can be but one reason assigned, which is the same so often inculcated already, thy blessed Master's love. Thy spouse, thy friend, thy God, thy Redeemer, chose thee rather than them. He chose thee among all. He singled thee from the rest. He hath given thee all possible demonstrations of his kindness. He hath called thee by his own name, that this mark and memorial might rest perpetually upon thee, that thou mightest never forget to whom thou belongest; he hath not given thee an empty name, but all the advantages imported by, and accruing from it; he hath anointed thee with the same oil of gladness, with which himself was anointed, that thou mightest be the anointed of the anointed; and from *Christ*, denominated in the most beneficial sense, a *Christian*.

But whence is this to the servant of thy Lord? didst thou excel in strength, in wisdom, or noble descent, in riches, or virtue, or any other qualification, which might entitle thee to this special favour, from which so many others are excluded? How many strong; how many wise, how many

noble, how many rich men have there been who yet have all been passed over and rejected? This therefore is another enchantment of thy favour, that they, notwithstanding all their pompous pretensions, were not admitted to the like privileges with thee, who hadst them not to allege in thy behalf. Thou wert miserable and deformed, naked and poor, dissolute and sinful, an object of abhorrence and detestation, yet did not thy God disdain thee; but even in these wretched, these forbidding circumstances, extended to thee the riches of this marvellous compassion and grace. And now, my soul, that thou hast seen thy happiness, see also what thy duty is resulting from the sense of it. For be assured, that notwithstanding all these kind advances, if thou do not make it thy constant care and most earnest endeavour to deck and adorn thyself as becomes thee, thou shalt not be admitted into the embraces of thy heavenly spouse. Set then about this necessary work, while thou hast time; for now is the proper season of dressing thyself for the marriage. Abate thy too solicitous concern for the outward appearance of thy body, and employ all thy pains upon thy inward man; set off thy face in the best manner; let thy habit be clean and comely, thy spots washed off, thy complexion clear, thy decays and blemishes refreshed; thy air modest and graceful, thy deportment orderly; and let it be thy chief, thy only business, so to prepare and fit thyself for thy Lord's approach, that the figure thou makest may be suitable to thy character, and become the chastity, the majesty of one who hath the honour of being a bride to an immortal husband, a heavenly king.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Communications of Divine Grace.

NOR let thy poverty discourage thee, as if I now advised to an impossible undertaking ; for this is yet a farther instance of thy Lord's love, that he furnishes thee with such ornaments, as he likes to see thee in, and such as could not be procured any where else, did not his bounty supply thee with them. From him alone it is, that thou art put into a condition of being clothed with good works, adorned with alms-deeds, and watchings, and fastings, and other acceptable instances of piety and devotion. All which, like garments of the richest materials, and most delightful colours, make up the dress, and set off the beauties of a heavenly soul. Whatever is necessary for thy health, whatever for thy refreshment and delight, whatever can restore lost beauty, or add to the gracefulness of that which thou already hast, thou needst not want ; for he hath plenty of all, and distributes his stores liberally. See now what a noble provision is made for thee, and how abundant care hath been taken for the relief of all thy necessities. At first thou wert possessed of nothing, and he imparted to thee what was fitting : this gift through thy default was lost, and he restored it to thee ; thus art thou never forsaken in any of thy distresses ; to convince thee how generous, how boundless an affection thy lover bears to thee. He will not lose thee ; and therefore he waits with great patience for thy better resolutions, and in much pity grants thee frequent opportunities of recovering again and again those precious advantages, which through thy own carelessness were often forfeited and gone. So that in all this matter, this remarkable difference de-

serves to be thankfully considered, that all the damage thou sustainest is entirely from thyself. but all the recruits of it are entirely from Him, And, O! how many are there, who once received the same advantages with thee; but though equally favoured in the gift at first, yet were denied the privilege of having them restored when lost, which thou hast had so very often repeated, by a particular indulgence of thy gracious God to thee above others: the grace of doing well was never denied thee, when thou wert as ready to receive and improve, as he constantly is to give it. And, if thou become an instrument of great good, it is his mercy that exalts thee to this high pitch of virtue: but if thou find great difficulties, and canst not attain to the perfection thou labourest after, and eagerly desirest, yet this should be esteemed an effect of mercy too. For he knows best what is convenient for thee, and will make a more advantageous choice than thou canst for thyself. And therefore the way always to think well and worthily of God, is to be thoroughly persuaded, that whatever he does with thee and thy affairs, is wise and good. For such is the love of God towards us, that there is not any one trial, which human nature labours under, not any one infirmity, to which it is subject, not any event that befalls any one of us; but he in his infinite goodness, and so far as we do not obstruct his gracious intentions of kindness, disposes it to our advantage. It may be, thou hast not the grace of an eminent and steady virtue; but, while the storms of temptation shake thee, that inconvenience is compensated by thy humility taking deeper root. And humility with an allay of frailties and failings, is more acceptable to Almighty God, than virtuous actions puffed up with vain-glory, and spiritual pride. When therefore thou observest any dispensation of Providence, do not presume to think

that some other method, or event, would have been better; but fear his majesty, reverence his wisdom, and make thy prayers to him, with a mind entirely resigned to his will. Imploring his protection and assistance, in such measures of grace, as he knows fittest for thee; that if there be any remains of evil in thee, his mercy would take them clear away; that, whatever good inclinations or beginnings he sees in thee, he would promote and bring them to due perfection; and, in a word, that he would at last bring thee to himself, by such a way as he shall find most agreeable to his own wise purposes. For, so thou do but attain the end, the means are what thou needest not be very solicitous about. That is the proper object of thy desires; but when thou extendest thy desires to these too, they then exceed their just bounds, and, if too anxious, take upon them to prescribe to Providence, in things which God hath reserved to his own free disposal.

CHAP. IX.

The Mercy of Instruction and Illumination.

AND now, my soul, I must ask thee again and again, *What shall we render to the Lord our God, for the innumerable benefits he hath done unto us?* Of which, that thou mayest take another prospect, consider, that he does not only give us cause to thank him for the same good things which he bestows upon others, but makes the very evils that befall us, experiments of his exceeding great love, that we in like manner might be moved to love him exceedingly, whether we reflect upon the good we enjoy, or the evil we endure. Thou, Lord, hast had compassion on my ignorance and blindness; and by my misery magnified thy mercy, in bringing me to the knowledge

of thee and thy truth : and granted me a clearer understanding in the dark and difficult passages of thy revealed will, than many others have arrived at. Some of my equals in years and natural abilities, thou sufferest still to continue in ignorance and error, but my eyes hast thou enlightened with thy grace, and thereby made me wiser than the aged. Thou hast endued me with strong faculties, a large capacity, a quick apprehension, a faithful memory. Thou givest success to my undertakings, agreeableness in conversation, improvement by my studies, comfort in my adversity, protection in my prosperity : which way soever I go, thy grace prevents and follows me ; and many times, when I have given myself for lost, thou hast by some sudden and surprising turn of mercy delivered me from my calamities and my fears. When I went wrong, thou hast brought me back, and guided me in the right way ; when I offended, thou hast reproved and chastened me ; when I was in heaviness, thou hast supported my spirits ; when I fell, thou hast set me up again ; when I stood, thou upheldest me : thou didst enable me to know thee more truly, to believe in thee more stedfastly, to love thee more vehemently, to follow thee more eagerly. And now, O Lord my God, the joy of my life, the light of my eyes, what requital shall I make thee for all thy inestimable mercies ? thou commandest me to love thee, but how can I ever love thee enough ? Nay, who am I indeed that thou shouldst desire or accept of my love ? for thou, Lord, art my strength and my castle, my deliverer and my refuge, my helper and protector, the horn of my salvation, my support, my all ; and, in a word, for that comprehends the whole of what I can say or think, thou, O Lord, art my God ; and whatever I have, or can do, or am, is of thee, and in thee, and by thee.

CHAP. X.

God's tender Care and constant Presence with us.

STILL I must repeat my grateful acknowledgment, that the blessings I have received from thee are great beyond measure, and many beyond number, of these it shall be my most delightful entertainment always to be talking ; and, Lord, I beseech thee, grant me a mind truly thankful, that my mouth may be ever full of thy praise, and my heart overflow with thy love, for thy infinite goodness to me. Thou seest, my soul, what noble pledges thou hast, and these pledges sufficiently declare the affection of that spouse, who gave them. Take care then to preserve thy charity and fidelity entire. Let no impure desires, no adulterous lust pollute or divide thy affection ; but keep thee only unto him to the last moment of thy life. If thou wert formerly an harlot, yet now thy virgin innocence is restored. For such is the excellence of his wonderful love, that it restores purity to them that had lost it, and preserves it unblemished to them who are careful to retain it. Let then the greatness of his mercy never slip out of thy mind, but consider how tenderly he loves thee, who never was wanting to thee in any demonstration of his kindness which thy condition required. I cannot but confess, when I reflect upon the constant presence, and the abundance of his mercies towards me, that I am almost tempted to say, that my salvation is his only business and care. For sure he could not be more tender of my safety, more ready to relieve all my distresses, to comfort all my sorrows, to supply all my wants, to guard me in all my dangers, could he be supposed to overlook the exigences of all his other creatures, and confine his good

providence to me alone. So watchful does he shew himself over all my affairs, so ever present to, nay, ever preventing my earliest wishes. Wheresoever I go, he forsakes me not; wheresoever I am, he stands by me; whatsoever I do, he strengthens and succours me; he is a constant observer of all my behaviour; and such is his goodness, that whatever commendable attempts I make, he works together with me in them, and by the success which I attain gradually, shews me that he condescends to work, not according to the efficacy of his own almighty power, but in proportion to my weak capacity. These instances make it indisputably clear, that though the imperfection of our present state will not allow us to see his face, yet we cannot be so stupidly blind, as not to be sensible of his presence. A presence, which can no more be concealed, than it can be avoided.

But while my thoughts are engaged upon this subject, I feel a new and unusual pleasure, that make such strong, such delightful impressions, as seem to transport and carry me out of myself. Methinks I am in an instant changed, and become quite another creature, and joys come flowing in upon me, more exquisite than I am able to express. My conscience is all over satisfaction; the anguish of my past sufferings is quite swallowed up, and not so much as a troublesome remembrance of them left behind. My mind is enlarged, my understanding clear and bright, my heart and its affections enlightened and purified; all my desires filled with pleasure, and my soul is perfect rapture and triumph. I am no longer here, methinks, but translated; I know not how, nor whither, to some unknown region of bliss: I embrace, as it were, with a most ardent love, some dear object with which I am not yet perfectly acquainted: I hold him fast, and strive all I can, never to part with him more; but still it is with a

sort of delightful difficulty, that I struggle not to let that break from me, which of all things I wish to keep for ever in my arms. For in him my soul seems to have found the complement and end of all her desires. This thought creates that eager and inexpressible transport of joy ; that she seeks nothing, covets nothing, beyond it ; but would esteem her happiness complete, could she continue always to be as now she is. What can this delicious object be, that pours in such a torrent of rapturous and uncorrupted pleasure ? Is it my Beloved ? Undoubtedly it can be none but he. It is thus my Lord vouchsafes to visit me. He comes in secret, not to be seen, not to be discerned by any of my senses. He comes to touch me, but not to shew me his face. He comes to put me in mind of him, but not to let me perfectly understand him. He comes to me to give me a taste of his sweetness, but not to give me his whole self ; to gratify my desires, but not to bestow upon me the fulness of his excellences. However, this is what my condition will admit, what I ought to receive with all the thanks and gladness possible ; for it is an assured foretaste of heaven, an inviolable earnest and token of his marrying me to himself. And blessed, ever blessed be thy mercy, for these assurances, these comfortable antepasts of future happiness : thou, Lord, art good and gracious, and canst not worthily be praised, for those supporting consolations, whereby thou, who hast promised, that my soul shall have a distinct view and full possession of thee hereafter, dost convince her, how sweet that enjoyment, and how precious the promises of it are, by condescending to give her a taste of thee here.

CHAP. XI.

The Benefit of our bodily Senses, and the preservation of our Lives.


HOW fervently then oughtest thou, my soul, to love this good God, who hath been so exceeding kind to thee! Nor am I yet, or ever should I be at an end, did I undertake to recount all his benefits. But, to keep close to what thou canst not sure but feel, and see daily and hourly, it shall be next my endeavour to kindle and fan this Divine flame, by putting thee in mind of such as thou carriest about with thee, and art thyself a living monument of. Consider then, what praise, what thanks, what devout zeal are due to Him, who converted the desires of my parents, which, since the corruption of human nature, are tainted and debased with an allay of impurity, to a profitable purpose; and made use of these for creating me of their substance; who breathed into me the breath of life, brought me to just maturity for birth, and put a difference between me and those, which, perishing by untimely abortions, or strangled at the gate of the womb, seem to have been conceived for death rather than life. It is of his mercy alone, that I am; it is a yet more valuable effect of the same mercy that I am a man; that I was endued with an understanding spirit, which makes a very advantageous distinction between me and brutes. To the same mercy I owe the comely form of this body, and the perfect use of those several organs of sense, so commodiously placed in it. Hence I have eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, nostrils for smelling, hands for handling, a palate for tasting, feet for walking; and, which crowns all the rest, a healthful constitution for my unspeakable ease and comfort. And

is not this another most wonderful instance of goodness, that God hath made such plentiful provision for the service, the entertainment, the delight of the senses; and suited objects so to the organs, that each is proportioned to the use and convenience of that sense, which it was designed to gratify and minister unto? That there are many bright bodies, many delightful sounds, many sweet smells, many grateful relishes, many things that pleasingly affect the touch. For this, no doubt, the good providence of God had in view, when he infused such different qualities into the bodies created by him, that there should be no sense of man, which from thence might not find a delight peculiar to it. And thus, we see, that sight is qualified to perceive one sort of objects; hearing, another; tasting, another; and the touch, a different kind from all the former. The beauty of colours feeds the sight; the harmony of sounds delights our ears, the fragrancy of perfumes entertains our smell, and the delicious relishes our taste. And who can express the vast variety of impressions, with which our senses are gratefully wrought upon? These are so many, and so different in each sense singly, that if any one be considered apart, one would think Providence had made it its business, to contrive plenty of amusements and pleasures for that alone. There is so inexpressible a beauty resulting from the diversity of colours to please the eye, and so many charming sounds of different sorts to delight the ear; such a vast usefulness attending those that are articulate, whereby men without any difficulty communicate their thoughts to one another, relate things already past, discourse of the present, predict the future, and disclose those that are secret, and must otherwise continue unknown, that if mankind were left destitute of these conveniences, their life would be but very little better

than beasts. If now to all the advantages of speech I should add those other entertainments of this sense, which result from the choirs of birds abroad, or from the melody of human voices, or from those improvements and imitations of natural music by art and instruments; it must be allowed me, that the several kinds of harmony are of infinite variety; of so great indeed they are, that the wit of man cannot conceive all the particular kinds, nor words explain and describe them distinctly. And yet all these are contrived for the service and delight of the ear. So nobly is this single sense provided for. A great deal might be said to the same purpose, concerning the objects pleasurable to the taste and the touch. But the resemblance between the case of these and the former is so great, that my reader may easily make his observations upon them, by what hath already been said concerning those.

And, as our senses, and a right disposition of the organs which serve them, is a very valuable blessing, so is it likewise, that our limbs have all their due place and figure; that no part of our body is so distorted, or defective, as to be painful to ourselves, or to make our deformity a subject, either of melancholy to our friends or relations, or of jest and scorn to strangers. But, which is yet of higher importance, within this body so commodiously ordered, I have a glorious inhabitant; an understanding spirit; capable of discerning and receiving the truth; of distinguishing between right and wrong, good and evil; nay, which tends more to it's happiness and perfection, qualified to seek and find its Creator, to desire and gasp after him, to praise and cleave, and be united to him, by the cement of a most ardent and inviolable love. Another great instance of God's goodness to me, I acknowledge it, that I was reserved for the glorious times of the gospel; born in a coun-

try, where his holy truth is professed ; and among such friends as took effectual care to instruct and establish me in the faith, and make me a partaker of the blessed sacraments. This is a mercy which vast numbers of people have not enjoyed, and therefore I have still the greater reason to be thankful for it ; since their condition and mine are in other respects the same : nor can I boast of any qualification that should give me the preference, or recommend me to so singular a favour, which hath not been in like manner extended to them. The sum and sole account of so distinguishing a providence is this, that God was just in leaving them, but exceeding gracious in calling me. Nor ought I upon this occasion to forget to thank God, that he was pleased to spare my parent's life, till the great business of my education was finished ; that the care of me was not turned over to them who could not have the same tenderness and natural affection for me ; that I escaped the many dreadful disasters, which some others did, and I was equally liable to suffer by : that the fire hath never burnt nor disfigured me, nor the water swallowed me up ; that evil spirits were never permitted to torment me ; that God hath shut the mouths of the beasts of prey, guarded me from their violence, kept me back from many a dangerous precipice, and preserved me from falls, and pits, losses or maimings of limbs, to which the giddiness of childhood, and the heat and folly of youth are perpetually exposed : and, lastly, that I was bred up, all along in the truth, faith, and obedience of him, and his will, till I arrived at years of discretion, and made that service of God my act and choice, which I was disposed to before by the happy prepossessions infused into me by others.



CHAP. XII.

God's long-suffering and Mercy which preserved us from, and forgave us after, the Commission of Sin.

SO great, so numerous, O Lord my God, are the proofs which thou hast given me of thy marvellous love! But, though I praise and adore thy Majesty for all thy wondrous works, yet art thou more justly to be admired for none, than for those acts of goodness and tender pity, which plainly speak the most enlarged bowels of our heavenly Father's paternal affection, to his unworthy and rebellious children. These are so unbounded, as to reach all without distinction. For thou despisest no man, castest off no man, abhorrest no man, except such only as by their own incorrigible folly, have given thee provocation, by first forsaking and contemning thee. And therefore I, O Lord, in particular, must own, that I have many mercies, and much indulgence of this kind to love and thank thee for. For thou hast frequently rescued me from dangers which had hemmed me in on every side, and left me no power to escape, by any strength or prudence of my own. When I was engaged in sinful actions, thou didst not leave me to perish in them; when I forgot thee, thou didst refresh my memory; when I was falling off from thee, thou didst recal and bring me home again; when I returned in obedience to that call, thou didst receive and meet me with open arms; and when my soul was wounded with grief for my former transgressions, thou didst comfort my sorrows, pardon my offences, accept my repentance, and speak peace to my troubled mind. Nay, I should detract from the greatness of thy mercy, in ac-

knowledging the benefit of so gracious a pardon, for my past actual transgressions only: since it is of the same mercy alone, that not only the crimes really committed by me, but all those too, which I should have committed, had not thy grace and good providence restrained and protected me, are not suffered to inflame my reckoning, at the last terrible day of account. For, as I do with shame and deep remorse confess, that the sins I have fallen into are many and grievous; so I am sadly sensible of my own weakness and frailty, and, that my faults would have far exceeded what they now have done, had not thy watchful care and goodness preserved me.

Now there are three ways, which I plainly perceive thou hast made use of to this purpose; and each hath greatly contributed to my safety. These are, the removal of the occasion, the power of resistance, and the integrity of my will and affections: for, without all dispute, I had been very frequently ensnared in sin, had temptations and opportunities offered themselves thicker to me; but the good providence of God so ordered the matter, that many times I had no evil suggestions prompting me to wickedness, nor any opportunity given the tempter for an assault. Again, I have frequently found myself attacked with great violence; but thou, O Lord, hast come to my succour, and poured in fresh recruits of grace and strength, whereby I was enabled to get the mastery over my appetites, and obstinately to hold out the siege, against the treachery of my own corrupt lusts, which would have betrayed and undermined me; and all the fury of the tempter, who laboured to storm the fort of my soul. But some sins again there have been, which thy mercy, O Lord, hath kept me at so great a distance from, that I perfectly abhorred the very thoughts of them; and never found myself so much as mo-

lest with any temptation to contract so black and detestable a guilt.

O that this had been the case with me in all things, that offend the God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity ! But where it was not, I have not wanted plentiful experience of thy goodness and compassion. For, alas ! my God, my conscience reproaches me with having too often and too heinously displeased thy Divine majesty. Wretch that I am, I have behaved myself unseemly in thy presence, I have done amiss and dealt wickedly; provoked thy anger, and deserved the hottest of thy vengeance. I have transgressed, and thou hast borne with it. I have sinned long and perversely, and still thou sufferest me to live. If I repent thou sparest me, if I return thou receivest me gladly. Nay, even while I dally and am so dilatory in this, my most important concern, thou waitest for my better and more serious thoughts. When I wander, thou bringest me back ; when I resist thy gracious methods, thou winnest me over and inclinest my will. When I am slothful, thou quickenest and spurrest me on ; when I flee to thee for mercy, thou readily extendest it : Thou instructest my ignorance, thou driest up my tears, supportest my drooping spirits, raisest me up again when I fall, reparaest my breaches and inward decays, grantest when I ask, art found when I seek thee, openest when I knock, shewest me the good way, and teachest me to walk in it, when thou hast discovered it to me. The grace of being thus favoured upon my own solicitous applications, is indeed very great ; but greater still is that, by which thy liberality, O Lord, even prevents my application to thee. And yet even those gifts which I have received at thy bountiful hand, before I could ask, or wish, or even think of them, are such, that should I attempt to declare, and speak of them particularly, they

would be found more than I am able to express. Had these unasked benefits prevented my requests and wishes then only, when the greenness of my years and understanding rendered me incapable of discerning my wants, and addressing to thee for proper supplies ; this had been a compassion in some degree necessary, to the ignorance of my childhood, or the inconsideration of my youth. But, which enhances the obligation yet more, I find the same goodness following, and even preventing me still, though arrived at an age of maturity and judgment. When I am qualified to present before thee supplications suited to a due sense of my wants, when I am in a condition of seeking thee, and desiring and cleaving steadfastly to thee, as my chief and only good. But, O wonderful love ! even now thou givest when I ask not, thou art with me, when I look not after thee, thou impartest to me those inestimable benefits, which I have not a just regard for ; nay, which I am so far from desiring, as even to despise them.

Another mercy of the first quality, I cannot but esteem that providence of thine, which gives thy angels charge over me. That a creature so frail and so exposed, should have a constant guard of thy appointment, and not be left to travel through this hazardous and troublesome wilderness of a world, like a stranger in an enemy's country, naked and alone ; but have powerful protectors and most affectionate guides to keep him company, and be an unseen security to him. This surely, among other considerations, should abundantly convince us of the dignity of our souls ; and how precious they are in thy sight, that thou art pleased to employ those bright and glorious *spirits* in *ministering* continually *for them who shall be heirs of everlasting salvation*.

But, above all, I must needs admire that unwea

ried patience and pity, which no provocations of mine could harden against me, so far as to withdraw the influence of that preserving providence, though I have justly forfeited it long ago. And to this I am sensible it is, that I owe the being still in the land of the living, and the having escaped the many dreadful disasters, which stood ready to devour and destroy me. For what can I say, why the earth should not long ago have opened her mouth and swallowed me up, why I have not been struck through with hot thunderbolts, blasted with lightning, drowned in the waters, or suffered some untimely or uncommon death, which might evidently appear to carry the marks of a signal vengeance, inflicted on me for the heinousness of my sins? This there was reason enough to apprehend: For, when by sinning I departed from my God, I did henceforth not only deserve thy anger, and to be punished by thy hand immediately: but I put myself into a state of hostility, and armed the whole creation against me. Thus we find it here below, that if any great man's servant revolt from his master, he does not exasperate his lord alone, but the whole family resent the thing, and look upon themselves concerned to punish the defection to the utmost of their power. And I, by parity of reason, after incurring the displeasure of thee, my God, the maker and governor of all things, ceased to deserve any friendship or good offices from any branch of this thy numerous family; and might expect, that every creature should rise up against me, and fight the quarrel of their incensed Lord. (Wisd. v. 17.) The earth might say, I owe thee no sustenance, and, instead of nourishing, ought rather to swallow thee up, because thou hast deserted my Maker and thy King, and listed thyself in the service of his enemy the devil. The sun might tell me, that he ought not to shed his beams upon

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be to those of carnality and luxury. And I must own with all due gratitude, that I in this respect have found myself so strengthened, as of late, by the assistances of Divine grace, to exercise that mastery over my appetite for a long time together; which formerly I was seldom able to retain for three poor days, without some sad defect or interruption. And this I count so very happy an alteration, as to challenge that acknowledgment of praise, *he that is mighty, hath done for me great things.* (Luke i. 49.) Some perhaps there are who have but a mean esteem of this blessing; but to me it appears a very signal one. For I am sensible what enemies I have to encounter, and how very great a proportion of strength is necessary, for waging this spiritual war with any tolerable success. The first enemy, which makes head against this virtue of ours, is our own flesh; (Gal. v. 17.) and the assaults upon it are those perpetual lustings against the Spirit, which every man hath such woeful experience of in his own breast. Now this is an enemy, from whose cruelty there is no running away; 'tis a domestic foe, an intestine war, and consequently a combat of infinite hazard and danger. Thou canst not, O my soul, dispossess or drive him out of thy quarters, the condition of thy nature hath tied him close to thee, and carry him about thou must wheresoever thou goest. Now what can aggravate our perils or our misery more than this, that we are under an indispensable necessity of subsisting the forces that fight against us? Kill them we must not, and starve them out we cannot. Consider this and then tell me, how strict a watch thou oughtest to keep over a seducer that lieth *in thy bosom.* (Micah vii. 5.)

But neither is this the only adversary we have to engage with; there is another which lays close siege, and compasseth us in on every side. I

a secret grudge, and remember the fault with bitterness and rancour? Either of which is very distant from a true and full forgiveness. But nothing can be more unlike than these, to the clemency and benignity of the Divine nature. For God gives liberally, and forgives absolutely; and, that repenting sinners may want no encouragement to trust in his mercy, and depend upon a favourable reception, when they have recourse to him, the greatness of the guilt we are assured is no bar to pardon; for *where the offence abounded there it is often manifest, that grace is wont much more to abound.* (Rom. vi. 1.) Of this the scriptures furnish many eminent testimonies for our consolation. Such was St. *Peter*, (Matt. xxvi. 74.) who, after having thrice solemnly and deliberately denied his Lord, had the care of Christ's sheep three several times committed to his trust. (John xxi. 15, 16, 17.) Such was St. *Paul*, who from a blasphemier of the truth, and a persecutor of the church of God, was made a *chosen vessel unto Christ, to bear his name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel.* (Acts ix. 15.) Such, once more, was St. *Matthew*, (Matth. ix. 9.) who from sitting at the receipt of custom, and the infamous character of a publican, was chosen to be an apostle, and had the honour of being the first writer of the New Testament.

CHAP. XIII.

The Power of mastering Temptations.

TO all his former valuable gifts, God hath been pleased to add that of continence. By which I mean the power of resisting and abstaining from, not only the pleasures of flesh and sense, but all other temptations and vices whatsoever, to which it is no less criminal to yield, than it would

be to those of carnality and luxury. And I must own with all due gratitude, that I in this respect have found myself so strengthened, as of late, by the assistances of Divine grace, to exercise that mastery over my appetite for a long time together; which formerly I was seldom able to retain for three poor days, without some sad defect or interruption. And this I count so very happy an alteration, as to challenge that acknowledgment of praise, *he that is mighty, hath done for me great things.* (Luke i. 49.) Some perhaps there are who have but a mean esteem of this blessing; but to me it appears a very signal one. For I am sensible what enemies I have to encounter, and how very great a proportion of strength is necessary, for waging this spiritual war with any tolerable success. The first enemy, which makes head against this virtue of ours, is our own flesh; (Gal. v. 17.) and the assaults upon it are those perpetual lustings against the Spirit, which every man hath such woeful experience of in his own breast. Now this is an enemy, from whose cruelty there is no running away; 'tis a domestic foe, an intestine war, and consequently a combat of infinite hazard and danger. Thou canst not, O my soul, dispossess or drive him out of thy quarters, the condition of thy nature hath tied him close to thee, and carry him about thou must wheresoever thou goest. Now what can aggravate our perils or our misery more than this, that we are under an indispensable necessity of subsisting the forces that fight against us? Kill them we must not, and starve them out we cannot. Consider this and then tell me, how strict a watch thou oughtest to keep over a seducer that lieth in *thy bosom.* (Micah vii. 5.)

But neither is this the only adversary we have to contend with: there is another which lays close about us, and lieth us in on every side. I

mean the present evil world, which hath no less than five avenues, always open to make his approaches by : the five senses of our body, through which he wounds me with his darts, and so *death comes up into my windows, and enters into my palaces.* (Jer. ix. 21.)

The third is that common and inveterate enemy of mankind, that old serpent, which is more subtle than all the beasts of the field. (Gen. iii. 1.) An enemy that attacks us unseen, and consequently more difficult to be avoided. Nor does he always proceed in the same method ; but sometimes falls on with open violence, sometimes trepanns us by secret cunning and fraudulent insinuation : His malice, however, and his cruelty, are always the same, and the end he drives at by the most different means is constantly our mischief and eternal ruin. And who now is sufficient, to vanquish, shall I say ? nay, even to hold out, and keep himself from being vanquished by this triple alliance and joint force ? these things are what I thought fit to have the more express notice taken of, that men might have the juster notion of the excellence, but withal the difficulty too, of that masterly virtue, which I mean here by continence. That they who are happy in it, might be duly sensible, how valuable a gift they have received from God, and in that sense might excite their hearts to a more earnest love of their Preserver and great Benefactor, who alone could bestow it upon them. For *it is through the Lord that we do all the great acts of this kind, and tread them under, that rise up against us.* (Psal. xlv. 5.) He it is, that subdues and crucifies our flesh, with its affections and lusts : he that protects us against this present evil world, and mortifies us to all its vanities ; and he it is, that breaks the serpent's head, and bruises Satan under our feet, with all his wicked wiles and temptations. Is there not reason then

from the contemplation of this virtue, and of the conquests it makes, and the power of making them which is received from above, to cry out again and again, *he that is mighty hath done for me great things, and holy is his name?*

CHAP. XIV.

The Benefit of a holy Hope.

BY being enabled to vanquish temptations, I am put into a condition of escaping eternal death; but it is yet a farther instance of mercy, that the Lord my God affords me such grace, as may qualify me for inheriting the blessings of eternal life. And this I take chiefly to consist in *three* things; the hatred of past evil, the contempt of present good, and the desire of that good which is to come: which desire is also supported and inflamed by another precious gift of God, the hope of obtaining that future blessedness. Now there are likewise *three* considerations, which uphold and strengthen my heart in this hope: and that so firmly, that no want of desert, on my part, not even the lowest and most mortifying thoughts of my vileness and unworthiness, nor the highest and most enlarged notions of the excellence of that bliss in heaven, can cast me down from this high tower of hope. No, my soul is rooted and grounded in it, past the power of being shaken with any melancholy misgivings. And the foundations that bear me up in all this firmness of mind are three. First, I consider the greatness of God's love, expressed in my adoption. Secondly, the truth of God, which hath promised this blessedness. And, thirdly, the power of God to make good whatever he hath promised to the uttermost. Let then my foolish desponding heart raise scruples to confound me, and object

never so importunately—" Vain man, consider what thou art, and what thou fondly imaginest thou shalt one day be ; what canst thou see in thyself, a creature so little, so polluted, to think that ever thou shouldst attain to a state of such purity, such excellent glory ? canst thou discern any proportion at all between a finite creature and infinite happiness ? or art thou able to discover any such extraordinary merit to ground thy hopes upon, as should incline God to exalt thee so much above what nature seems to have qualified thee for ? these difficulties I am in no degree terrified by, but can with great assurance return this answer to them, and rest my soul upon it, *I know whom I have believed, and am verily persuaded,* that God would have adopted me for his own child, had he not loved me exceedingly ; that he would never have promised, had he not resolved to perform ; and that if these things could be supposed greater than really they are, yet the putting me in actual possession of them cannot exceed in his power, because I am sure he can do whatsoever pleaseth him, both in heaven and earth. And therefore I can never love God enough, for inspiring and comforting me with this hope, and putting me into the way of attaining the bliss, he hath encouraged me to expect at his merciful hands. And great encouragements I have from those earnest and antepasts of his future goodness which he vouchsafes me even in this world. For such, I reckon, are his following after, and overtaking me, when I fled away from him ; his controuling and banishing my fears by the charms of meekness and kindness, cherishing and frequently reviving my hopes, when I lay languishing in despair ; his even constraining me to better obedience, by heaping on fresh benefits, notwithstanding my ingratitude for those I had formerly received ; his giving me a better sense of things, and

enabling me to relish the sweetness of spiritual joys, when my palate stood to none, but such as were impure and merely sensual: his bursting my bonds asunder, and setting me at liberty, from the bondage of evil habits, which I had not the power to break; and his receiving me with so much tenderness, when by his help I had weaned my affections from the world, and forsaken all to follow him. He would not have done thus much for me already, had he not intended to do more hereafter; and therefore I will trust his word for this fulness of bliss in reversion, and dare depend upon the full accomplishment of it to his servant (though of myself most unworthy,) since I have such grounds of assurance from the many precious pledges of an inviolable love exhibited, and paid me down in hand.

CHAP. XV

The many Instances of God's Bounty, notwithstanding our Sins, and the Thanks due to him upon this Account.

PROCEED then, my soul, in these most pleasing contemplations, and sustain thyself against all desponding thoughts, by recollecting those many other proofs of the Divine goodness, which have been so peculiar, so secretly conveyed to thee, that none but thyself could be privy to them. Think of those retired pleasures, which thy Lord entertains thee with in secret, upon thy retreat from the world, and private conversation with him; what delicious food he hath provided for the satisfying of thy spiritual hunger: what inestimable treasures of mercy he hath given thee richly to enjoy; what secret longings he inspires thee with, and how plentifully thou hast been made to drink of the ravishing cup of his love.

Was it then not a noble condescension, a most astonishing instance of compassion, that he left me not destitute of spiritual comforts? me, I say, who was a slothful and ungracious servant, a fugitive, a rebel, and one who never had returned to him and my duty, if he in mere, in boundless pity, had not called me home? for thou canst not sure but remember, my soul, that if at any time I was under sharp trials, he interposed with seasonable supports: if I was ready to be overpowered by dangers, he presently fortified me against them: if I was dejected with grief, he sustained my spirits; if I was wavering in my duty, he strengthened and kept me steady: if I grew dry and heavy, fearful and faint, he poured in the refreshments of his holy Spirit, and gave a grateful relish to my devotions. O I never can, I never ought to forget, when I have been reading, or hearing, or praying, or meditating, in private or in public, how often he hath shone in upon me, and, by a ray of heavenly light, guided my mind to a right understanding of his holy word, opened mine eyes that I might see the meaning, the wondrous hidden things of his law; collected my scattered thoughts, put a stop to my wanderings; and made them all to centre in himself, with a desire too intense to be expressed: how often he hath drawn off my mind from earthly objects, and raised it up to heavenly delights; and fixed it there, and entertained me with those pleasures, which are the portion of the blessed above. These and many more expressions of his mercy I have felt and rejoiced in; more than I can, more than perhaps would become me to mention particularly, lest I should seem to exceed the bounds of modesty, to insinuate an opinion of some more than common worth in one so highly favoured, and arrogate to myself a part of that glory which is entirely his. For, according to the vulgar notions of these mat-

ters, the grace of the giver, and the privilege of the receiver, are so closely connected, that he who ought alone to be praised, is seldom praised alone; for the person who is so signally happy in the gift, is generally admitted into a share of the value and commendation due to it. But, alas! what share hath any of us, even the best of us all which he hath not received? and what applause can belong to him, who received all the powers of doing well freely, as if this receiving were in any degree meritorious? to thee, therefore, O Lord my God, to thee alone, be the praise, the glory and thanksgiving: but to me, I am sure, belongs nothing but shame and confusion of face, for the numberless evil things I have done against thee, and the numberless good things I have been blessed with from thee.

And indeed my thanks are by no means what they ought to be, except these articles be both taken in. For, though the consideration of thy goodness be by itself just matter of gratitude and wonder; yet it is still more engaging, more astonishing, when that of our offences and grievous wickedness is added to it. For, if it be a commendation of bounty, to give largely where the receivers have deserved nothing; how shall we find ideas large enough to represent, and worthily extol that kindness, which returns good and evil, and bestows liberally where men have been as liberal in their injuries and provocations? what strange bowels of a fatherly affection are those, which the most insolent, most perverse, most undutiful children cannot harden against themselves? And yet, my soul, this is directly the state of the case between God and thee. Many things there are, which he in mercy forgives, many that he forgives most readily, and in great abundance. But then we must remember, that the evils he forgives are entirely ours, and the good things he bestows

are entirely his own. He is always ready to pardon, he is not less ready to give : the one proves his boundless pity, the other his boundless liberality ; or rather, indeed, both the one and the other prove, that neither his pity nor his liberality have any bounds. Let us therefore give glory to God by confessing the good we have done, let us do it, likewise, by confessing the good we have received. Let us acknowledge the evil to be all our own, that his mercy may be inclined to pardon it ; let us acknowledge the good to be all his, that his bounty may continue, and add to it. And let this be our constant daily work ; for we can never exceed in any expressions of that gratitude, which is due, both upon the account of the sins he hath pardoned, and of the gifts and graces he hath bestowed. Thus, I say, every one should be employed, who thinks himself, or who desires to be a true lover of God : for true love will be always labouring to express itself in such confessions and acknowledgments.

And what now do we think should be the result of all these considerations ? what indeed but this, that every one who lays them seriously to heart, shall take his mind off from all other objects, and place his love on God alone, who hath done so much for him ? that he should find himself very tenderly affected, and wonderfully transported with every reflection upon such amazing kindness and compassion ? If any man can observe so much mercy, so strong obligations, and yet be wanting in affection to God, let such a one be assured, that this coldness proceeds from his neglect and thoughtlessness. For every one who will be at the pains to consider, will easily find himself so highly indebted to God, that all he can do in this service is little enough, and much less than is owing him in return. It is true indeed all mens engagements in this point are not the same :

nor hath God distributed his blessings with a perfectly even hand ; but they that have least have more than they can lay claim to, more than they can ever be sufficiently grateful for. Admitting then that a man be not furnished even with all those graces which are necessary to salvation, yet will not this bear such a one out in murmuring against providence, or charging God foolishly. For God is wise and just in all his dispensations : he proceeds upon measures, which, though unknown to us, are yet most reasonable in themselves. *He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will be hardeneth.* (Rom. ix. 16.) And, being no man's debtor, but absolutely master of his own favours, he may give where he sees fit, and resume what he had given, when and from whom he sees fit, without being accountable for either. Let him, therefore, who hath not those gifts, lament his own misfortune with humility, and labour after them, and pray for them most earnestly ; and let him, who hath them make a just estimate of the mighty blessing, and give all diligence to be truly thankful to God for it.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Death of Christ.

I FOR my own part do most humbly confess, that the benefits I have received from thee, my Lord and my God, are unmeasurably great, are innumerable many : so many and so great, that I should be of all creatures the most unworthy and insensible, should I not always love and always praise thee for them. For whatever good thing I am now, or ever was, or ever shall be possessed of, is from thee, the Supreme Good, from whom all that is good proceeds. And yet there is one thing still behind, which, I must own, inflames my heart, and excites my affection, more

powerfully than all the rest. For never was any instance of thy kindness so engaging, so irresistible, as that most shameful and most bitter death; which thou, O blessed Jesus, didst submit to for the accomplishing of the most glorious work of our redemption. This singly, or at least this with the rest, lays indisputable claim to all our life, to all our labours, to all our obedience, to all our love. This, I say, is the consideration, which of all others excites our devotion most frequently, entertains it most agreeably, and raises it to the loftiest pitch. For in this great design the great Creator of the world takes pains, and seems to have retrieved the fabric of his own framing with much more difficulty than he at first built it all out of nothing. With what ease that was done, the Psalmist very lively expresses. *He spake the word and they were made, he commanded and they were created*; but for the restitution of lost men, good God! how many, how grievous, how long a *series* of labours and sorrows didst thou undergo! Come hither then, my soul, and behold what manner of love thy Saviour hath bestowed on thee; who, without any manner of necessity to compel him, without any prospect of profit to induce him, but purely of his own free mercy, was content to suffer such hardships, such barbarous indignities for thy sake! Well might I say, that this single act of goodness is an overbalance to all the rest. For though it be a great kindness to lay out what we have for another's advantage, yet what we have bears no proportion to what we are; nor ought that to be compared with the giving a man's own self. And, if the most exalted friendship we ever heard of can go no higher than one friend's laying down his life for another; how much more noble was that charity of which the Son of God left us this unexampled proof, of his laying down his life for his enemies.

And that this was our condition the Apostle declares, *When we were enemies*, says he, *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*; (Rom. v. 10; vii. 8.) and again, *scarcely for a righteous man will one die, but God herein commendeth his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.* (1 Pet. iii. 18.) He removed down from the mansions of bliss in heaven, that he might carry us back thither with him. O unspeakable love! O sweetness of mercy unconceivable! O most amazing condescension! that God for the sake of man should be made man, that God for man should die in the flesh, that he should submit to be *tempted in all things like as we are, only without sin.* (Heb. iv. 15.) See at how inestimable a price, see with what difficulty man was redeemed; who had forfeited and enslaved himself to the devil; and had he not been ransomed at so vast an expense, must unavoidably have suffered eternal damnation, with that tyrannical master of his own choosing. These reflections will shew thee, O man, how much thou art bound to love God; and if he calls thee to it, how patiently, how willingly, nay, with how cheerful and eager zeal thou oughtest to endure hardships and pain, and tortures, for him who hath endured so much incomparably greater for thee. For it is *through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of God.* And therefore let my soul gladly embrace her crucified *Jesus*; let her, my sweetest Saviour, drink deep of thy delicious blood; let this most moving theme be her constant meditation, that I may never one moment be unmindful of him that died for me. I am *determined* from henceforth *not to know any thing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*; (1 Cor. ii. 2.) lest other vain mistaken notions should draw my knowledge off from the firm bottom of saving faith: and O!

let this wonderful love of thine take possession of all the love I am capable of, lest any rival passion insinuate itself into my heart, and I be swallowed up with a torrent of worldly affections.

In thus devoting my whole self to thee, I shall consult not my duty only, but my happiness too. For those hearts, which the sweetness of thy love hath taken full possession of, are all tranquillity and joy : there is no place for fear to damp them, or lust to defile them, or anger to distract them, or pride to swell them, or vain-glory to blow them about, or ambition to gall them, or covetousness to narrow them, or sorrow to deject them, or envy to emaciate them ; in short, no disorderly vice disturbs their peace, or corrupts their joy, but they continue firm and calm, like those upper regions, where clouds and storms have no power. And what can we imagine will God give, or what will he not give hereafter to those good men who taste so largely of his bounty here ? For even the best of those gifts men have in hand are temporal : but those which he hath promised to bestow upon them that love him in the next world, are eternal, and consequently much more desirable than any temporal advantages ; that even to make a comparison between them were to injure and disparage them. For this is a condition common to all temporal advantages ; that they are very hardly got, and very easily lost again : that, while we have them in possession, they are kept at the expence of a great deal of anxious care, and parted with to our great grief, and if ever retrieved again, yet not without a great deal of toil and trouble. But the happiness of the next world is not capable of loss or diminution ; the enjoyment of it is pleasure without alloy, and ease without fraud or disturbance ; the desires of it are always keen, and the delights of possession always new. No man receives them but with full security, that they shall

no more be taken from him against his will, than he shall ever have the will to divest himself of them.

CHAP. XVII.

The Promises of God.

THIS may persuade us to make the promises of God another incentive to the love of him. For, though the benefits he hath given his servants are great; yet those which he hath engaged to give them, are incomparably greater. Now these are, rest from our labours, a change from bondage to liberty, from fear to security, from grief to comfort; resurrection to a life immortal after death; and after that resurrection, exquisite and endless joy: in a word, he hath promised to give us himself. So unspeakably glorious are his promises. And the love which these beget in us, he expects should exert itself after a very particular manner: and that is, by a vehement desire of the promise, in which it is impossible to be guilty of excess. In other cases we blame men for being impatient; but this case is an exception to the rest, and here men are to be commended for it. To be contented with delays argues languid desires and coldness of affection; and as the wise man observes very truly, *hope deferred maketh the heart sick*. Since then these blisses are to be obtained no where but in our heavenly country, it betrays too great an indifference for such noble reversions, when we do not long most earnestly to get at them, and are not weary and perfectly sick of every thing that conspires to detain us from them.

CHAP. XVIII.

The Happiness of a future State.

LET us then raise our thoughts as high, and stretch them as wide as ever we can, that we may try to represent to ourselves in some measure the nature and perfection of that joy of the saints, which no other is equal, no other like unto. Now that chief good, which we find called by the several titles of life, light, blessedness, wisdom, eternity, and the like, is but one most simple and supreme good, perfect and self-sufficient, without which no other thing can either be perfect, or indeed be at all : this good, I say, is God the Father, this the word, or Son of God, this again is that pure undivided love common to Father and Son both, the Holy Ghost, I mean, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son. Now such as each of these persons is, considered apart by himself, such is the whole Trinity taken together—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost : for each of these singly is nothing else but the one most simple, constant being, which can neither be multiplied, nor diversified, nor changed. Here then is that one thing which is necessary : for that must certainly be a necessary good, in which all good is, nay, which itself is good, the one whole and sole good. If each of these things, which we call good, minister so much delight, how much must flow from the possession of Him who comprehends them all, and is as much superior to them in excellence, as the Creator is above the creature? Let us not then lavish away our time and pains upon things that only flatter us with deceitful promises of happiness ; but let us love this one good, for that alone can suffice for all our exigencies, and fill all our largest desires. It is but lost labour to attempt

a just description of the bliss reserved for us in our heavenly Father's kingdom; no words can express, no mind confined in flesh can expand itself sufficiently to conceive them. For when we have let loose our thoughts, still those joys are of a compass larger than they can fetch. Many and glorious things indeed have been spoken of this city of God, but yet the half of the truth hath not been told us. This is the only instance, in which report can never exceed, and praises can never flatter; no knowledge can come up to it, no glory compare with it. The kingdom of God, in a word, is full of light and peace, charity and meekness, honour and glory, sweetness and love, joy and everlasting bliss: to be short, of every thing that is good, more and better than can be possibly express or conceived: but still this is no argument, why I should not speak of it at all, or represent its excellencies as well as I can, because I cannot do it so well as I would, we believe the majesty of God to be unspeakably glorious; but no man is so extravagant sure, to infer from thence that we ought never to speak of him, nay, it follows rather, that we should speak the most glorious things we are able, that they who hear us may believe him to be still far above all we can say of him. Much more, it is evident, may be comprehended by the understanding, that a man can find proper words to utter; and yet the most profound and capacious mind cannot comprehend or have any ideas of the kingdom of Heaven in any degree suitable to its real excellence. And therefore the life to come is what we have represented to us by the following character, that it is eternal in duration, and a blessedness to all eternity, a state where there is the most profound security and tranquillity, pleasure without passion, love without fear, love in perfection, day without night, activity and strength without possibility of decay,

perfect unanimity, all the souls in it rapt with the contemplation of God, and past all apprehension of being ever deprived of his beatific presence: a city blest with the most glorious inhabitants, where all the saints and angels take up their perpetual residence; the splendour whereof consists in the shining graces of God's elect; where health abounds, and truth reigns for ever! where there is no deceiving, no being deceived; out of which none of the happy are ever expelled, into which none of the wretched are ever admitted.

This is that happy contemplative life, which they who can reach up to, by the finishing of their virtues, shall for ever enjoy, and be like the spirits of just men made perfect, and shall reign with them for ever. What such have here anticipated by faith, they shall there have in sight; beholding with pure hearts the substance of their Creator; rejoicing with never-ceasing and exceeding great joy; united unseparably to God, and to each other by the full fruition of the Divine goodness, and the charms of mutual love: then shall their once scattered bodies be restored, and put on immortality and incorruption; and, thus united, they shall be made free subjects of their heavenly country, and invested with all the privileges of the city of God. Then shall they reap the fruits of all their holy labours, those eternal recompenses, the promises and distant expectation whereof sustained their spirits in the many long and painful conflicts here below. A general gladness there shall overflow, and these joys shall be so agreeable, that they shall always be thankful to their bountiful rewarder, for the plenty he hath so nobly enriched them with, and yet that plenty shall abate no man's satisfaction in the abundance he enjoys. There every man's heart shall be open to every man, for every breast shall be so white and pure, that the soul so cleansed shall find cause to thank

God for washing away their stains in the blood of his Son, but not at all to be ashamed, or blush for any of their old blemishes; and why should they not see into one another's hearts freely, who have no secrets in reserve, no separate interest to promote, no deceit to manage, no faults to conceal? for neither sins nor sinners are in heaven, and they who once were such, from the instant of their entering that place of purity, are out of all possibility ever to be so any more. None of the darkest secrets, none of the deepest mysteries shall then continue such: the blessed shall be let into a distinct knowledge of them; and, which is infinitely better, they shall be ever viewing and admiring the adorable perfections of God himself.

This human nature shall then be advanced to its just and utmost perfection, incapable of being exalted or sunk lower any more. All the excellences communicated to it by being made after the likeness of its Maker, shall then be set at their highest pitch, and the corruption and defects introduced by sin utterly done away. Nay, we shall even rise above what was given us at our first creation, though we had been so happy as to retain our primitive advantages. We shall understand and judge without error, remember without forgetfulness, think without wandering, love without dissimulation; we shall have sense without any thing to offend it, ease without pain, life without death; power of acting without obstruction, fulness without nauseating, and such a perfection of every faculty, that there shall be in us all imaginable soundness and vigour, without any sort of disease or decay. Whatever maim our bodies may have suffered here, by sudden disasters or wasting distempers, or mortified sores; whatever limbs have been lost by the biting of wild beasts, or the cruelty of men no less barbarous than they, by war, or fire, or any other dis-

membering accident; nay, even the weakness and deformities of sickness and old age, shall all be repaired at the general resurrection; every defect supplied, every loss restored, and the body complete in all its parts; sound and youthful, beautiful and gay, shall then, together with the soul, be clothed with everlasting health and immortality. So happy shall all the saints be at that day; but though all shall be happy, yet will not they all be equally so; their blisses then will hold proportion to their virtues now; and *one star differs from another star in that glory*, (1 Cor. xv. 41.) because the merciful King of glory *rewards every man according to his works*. (Psal. lxii. 12.)



SELECT
MEDITATIONS
OUT OF
ST. AUGUSTINE'S SOLILOQUIES.

Book III.

CHAP. I.

O LORD, that *searchest me out and knowest me*, (Psal. cxxxix. 1.) help me likewise to know thee, thou life of my soul. Shew me thy face, my light, my comfort, thou joy and desire of my heart. (John xvii. 3.) Let me find, let me embrace, let me possess thee, my heavenly spouse, my everlasting bliss. Let me love thee, O Lord, my *strength*, my *tower of salvation*, my hope, and help, and sure refuge in all manner of distress: (Psal. xviii. 1.) let me enjoy thee, my chief good, without whom nothing is good.

O *word of God* eternal, *sharper than any two-edged sword*, (John i. 11; Heb. iv. 12.) open mine ears, that I may hear thy voice. O light incomprehensible, enlighten mine eyes that they may behold thee; and scatter, Lord, all those mists of vanity that dance before my sight, and lead me into sin and error. Make me a new smell, that I may *run after the odour of thy ointments*; (Cant. i. 3.) and correct my vitiated palate, that I may taste and delight in thy sweet and gracious goodness. And, having thus reformed my *sensitive*,

carry on, I beseech thee, the good work in the *intellectual* faculties of my soul; (Psal. xxxiv. 8.) oh, that my understanding may apprehend thee, my will choose thee, my memory retain and meditate upon thee, and my whole heart cleave to thee with immoveable stedfastness, and a most sensible delight. O life, to and by whom all things live; without whom I die and perish, by whom I am animated, sustained, restored, exhilarated, where shall I find thee, that I may go out of myself, and subsist entirely in thee? Thou hast said indeed, *no man shall see me and live*. (Exod. xxxiii. 20.) Lo! if this be the condition of my happiness, I most gladly accept it; yea, let me die, O Lord, that I may see thee in heaven; and let me see thee, that I may die to this world. *I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better*: (Phil. i. 23.) I wish to die, that I may see my Lord: I would not live here, that I may live with Christ. *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*; (Acts vii. 59.) take thou my soul, my life; enter into my heart, thou joy of my heart, that it may rejoice in thee. Shed thy bright beams upon it, sun of righteousness, that it may know and love thee; for therefore does it not love thee as it ought, because it knows thee but very imperfectly; and therefore is its knowledge very imperfect, because thy light hath hitherto *shined in darkness*, (John i. 5.) and my *darkness* did not receive it as it ought.

O light of truth, and true light, which *lightest every man that cometh into the world*, (that cometh into it, but not that loveth it; for whosoever will be a friend of the world, is an enemy to God), (Jam. iv. 4.) dispel the thick darkness which is upon the face of this *chaos*, that my mind may see thee, by its intellectual powers, and so comprehend, as to know thee, and so know, as to love thee. For every one that knows thee, loves thee,

even more than himself, forsakes himself and flies to thee, that there he may find peace and perfect joy. For want of that knowledge it is that I have been so extremely defective in this point: departing from thee, the true inward and spiritual joy, and seeking satisfaction in outward objects. Thus have I, with an adulterous affection, set that unfaithful heart upon vanities, which of right was entirely thine. And I have succeeded according to my folly. For as vanity was the object, so hath it been the fruit and portion of my love. This made it impossible for me to delight in, and to rest upon thee. For I was conversant about external, whereas thou art to be found only in internal pleasures. I made temporal advantages my study. Thou impartest thyself in those that are spiritual; my thoughts, and discourse, and inclinations, were engaged and intangled in short and transitory things: and thou, O Lord, *inhabitest* in, nay, art thyself *eternity*. (Isa. lvii. 15.) Thou art in heaven, I altogether upon earth: thou lovest high things, I foolishly dote on such as are vile and low. And what way can be found to reconcile such contrary dispositions?

CHAP. II.

WHEN, wretched man, when shall this crooked in thee be made straight, and modelled by the rule and pattern of thy God? He delights in solitude and retired contemplation, I pursue variety of company and diversions: he dwells in silence, I in noise and hurry: he loves truth, I follow lies and deceit: he requires, and is himself unspotted purity; I wallow in uncleanness, and all manner of filthy lusts. Thus, Lord, thou art good, and I evil; thou holy, I a miserable sinner; thou art light, I blindness; thou life,

I am dead; thou essential truth, I *altogether vanity*. (Ps. xxxix. 6.) Such, alas! am I, and such is *every man living*. And now what shall I say to thee, my God? I am thy creature, and reduced to nothing; *thy hands have made me, and fashioned me*; (Ps. cxix. 73.) nay, thy hands were nailed to the cross for me; *do not*, my Creator, *despise the work of thy own hands*; (Ps. cxxxviii. 8.) do not, my Redeemer, forget the wounds of thy own hands. Behold, thou hast *graven me* (Isa. xlix. 16.) upon the palms of thy hands; O read those indelible characters, and save me. To thee thy creature lifts up his soul, make me again by thy regenerating power; inspire me with new life by thy enlivening influence; heal my breaches, repair my decays, and spare me by thy mercy, for my days are *even as nothing in comparison of thee*. (Ps. xxxix. 5.)

Lord, what is man, that he should presume to expostulate with, or address to God his Maker? Pardon thy servant, Lord, who is but dust and ashes, and yet takes upon him to speak to so great a majesty: let my necessity be accepted as an excuse for this boldness. (Gen. xviii. 27.) My grief will have vent, and my calamity forces a complaint. I am sick, and cry to my physician for help; blind, and seek to the light; dead, and implore the life of souls. For this physician, light, and life art thou, and only thou; and therefore, *Jesus of Nazareth, have mercy on me; Son of David, have mercy on me*. (Luke xviii. 37, 38, 39.) O fountain of health, hearken to the complaints of thy poor diseased patient. O light which *passed by*, stand still a while, 'till this blind creature can come to thee: lend him thy hand, and in *thy light let him see light*. (Ps. xxxvi. 9.) O life essential and everlasting, raise from the grave of destruction this wretch, long dead in trespasses and sins. Lord, what am I,

who have thus taken upon me to talk to thee? A stinking carcase, food for worms, a polluted broken vessel, fuel for the fires of hell: O wretched creature! mercy, my God, mercy! for all this and no better is *man born of a woman, who hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery*: (Job xiv. 1.) *man who is altogether vanity, compared to the beasts that perish, and resembling them in folly*. (Ps. xxix. 6; xlix. 20.)

But what, alas! am I, the worst of men? A dark abyss, a clod of earth, a *child of wrath*, a *vessel of dishonour*, (Ephes. ii. 3.) conceived in uncleanness, living in trouble, dying in anguish: poor and naked, miserable and weak, not knowing whence I came and whither I go; whose *days pass like a shadow, whose life withereth like grass*. (Ps. cii. 11.) The more is added to it, the more is taken from it; and every step from my cradle is a nearer advance to my grave. Who for a while am exercised with the vicissitudes of joy and grief, of health and sickness; with fear and trembling, hunger and thirst, heat and cold, languishing and pains, and at last must sink down and vanish in death, which hath a thousand ways of snatching mortals out of the world, when they are least aware of it; most certain in itself, but in the time and manner most uncertain.

This, Lord, is my misery, and yet I am secure in the midst of all these dangers. So great is my calamity, so little is my sense of it. I will therefore cry to my God, *before I go away hence, and be no more seen*. (Ps. xxxix, 13.) I will confess my vileness before thee, and shew thee all my trouble. Help me, my strength, by whom I am sustained. Shine upon me, my light, by whom alone I see: come unto me, and quicken me, my life, by whom alone I live. For thou alone art my help and light, my life and my joy, my Lord, and *my God*.

CHAP. III.

The Misery of unregenerate Man.

O LORD, the word of God, the word itself God, thou art light, and by thee the light was made; (John i. 1, 2.) *thou art the way, the truth, and the life*, (John xiv. 6.) in whom is no darkness or error, no vanity or death. Without thee *I put darkness for light, and light for darkness.* (Isa. v. 20.) Without thee I am all over confusion and mistake, ignorance and blindness: say to my soul, *let there be light*, (Gen. i. 3.) that I may discern the light, and avoid darkness; that I may see the way, and be delivered from my wanderings; that I may know the truth, and not be deceived by falsehood; that I may attain the true life, and not be swallowed up in death. Thou art my Lord, and I will fear thee; my God, and I will praise thee; my Father, and I will love thee; my spouse, and I will keep myself only unto thee. Pity this desolate creature, which *sits in darkness and in the shadow of death, and guide my feet into the way of peace*, (Luke i. 79.) that I may *go into the house of my God with the voice of joy and thanksgiving*. (Ps. xlii. 4.) For, this is the way, by which I must return from my errors, into thee the true way, even the way of life.

I will therefore approach thee, O Father of heaven and earth, and lay before thee all my state, that the frank confession of my misery may recommend me to thy mercy. I was reduced to nothing, nay, to worse than nothing, and knew it not, because thou art the *truth*, and I was not with thee: I was wounded with my transgressions, and felt no smart, because thou art *the life*, and I was not with thee. I was brought to nothing, because thou art the *Word*, by whom all things were made, and I was not

with thee. For God *saw all things that he had made, and behold they were very good.* (Gen. i. 13.) They must be so, because *nothing was made without him*, (John i. 3.) and nothing that is good can be otherwise so, but by its participation of, and union with, the supreme Good: but God made no evil, nor hath it any being of its own, but is only a privation of good, and is therefore nothing, and makes the committers of it in God's account nothing too, as being made without the word, without which nothing that hath an actual existence was made; and therefore is it evil, because it proceeds not from, and hath no part in, that good, by which *all things were made*. And consequently to be without the *word*, is to be nothing; and evil argues a defect only, and not a positive effect, because all things that are, are by the Word.

Now what it is to be without the Word, is easy to be understood from that description given of himself; *I am the way, the truth and the life:* (John xiv. 6.) he that is without these, is without the Word; and to be without him is evil, because it separates from the Author of all good: it is also to be nothing, because it infers a defect, a privation of living in and with him, by whom all things that exist are, and are made good. So often then as we depart from good, so oft we depart from the Word, and from our proper existence. And I thank thee, O Lord, for so far enlightening me with the knowledge of thee, and of myself, as to make me sensible, that whensoever I forget that which is good, and corrupt myself with evil, I am transformed from what I was, lose my spiritual life and being, and am cut off from thee. Wretch that I was, not to consider this before! How low I fell, and how exactly that description of the heathen idols suited the condition of my soul; for this too, during my separation from thee, *hath ears and hears not, nose and*

smells not, eyes and sees not, mouth and speaks not, hands and acts not. (Ps. cxv. 5, 6, 7.) In short, is nothing but an empty form, the lines and proportions of every part, without the use and sensation proper to any of them.

So true it is, that while I was without thee, I was not at all ; but fell back into nothing ; blind and deaf, and insensible to do good, having no inclination, no knowledge to avoid evil. Hence, had my enemies their will upon me ; they stripped and wounded, they spoiled and slew me, because I departed from thee, my light and my defence. But, O God of my life, raise me, I pray thee, from this death. Look upon me in the day of my trouble, and save me from the hand of the insulting adversaries. Let them that hate me flee before thee, and let me live in thee, and by thee. They saw my misery, and had me in derision, they divided my virtues, those garments given to adorn my soul, among them, and rode over my head ! They defiled thy holy temple with filth and sin, and brought me into ruin and desolation : they led me captive from one wickedness into another, and dragged me through mire and clay. I was a slave, and in love with my boudage ; blind, and *loved darkness rather than light* ; tied and bound, and fond of my chains ; miserable, and knew it not. And all, because separated from that almighty Word, by which every creature subsists, and is preserved. O do thou from henceforth unite me to thyself ; for, when I go from thee, I perish ; and can no other way be restored to being, but by that Power making a new creature, which at the first did make me out nothing. And, blessed be that power and mercy, which visited me when I offended, raised me up when I was fallen, taught me when I was ignorant, and gave sight to my eyes when I was *blind*.

CHAP. IV.

An Act of Praise for God's manifold Mercies in Man's present State.

TEACH me, my God, how much I ought to love thee, how thankfully I ought to praise thee, how carefully I ought to please thee. Let the voice of thy thunder be heard from above, and pierce the ears of my stupid heart; that I may magnify that goodness, which created me when as yet I was not: which enlightened me when I was in darkness; which revived me when I was dead; which sustained me from my youth up with its bounty; and still cherishes this vile, useless, loathsome worm, with the good gifts of its right and left hand.

Open to me, *O key of David, which openest, and no man shutteth* against him to whom thou openest; (Rev. iii. 7.) and *shutteth, and no man openeth* to him against whom thou shuttest; open to me, *holy and true*, that I may enter into thy light, and see, and know, and thank thee with my whole heart. For *great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell. O Lord, my God, how excellent is thy name in all the world! What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?* (Ps. lxxxvi. 13; viii. 1, 4.) O hope of thy saints, and life of my soul, by whom I live, and without whom I die; light of my eyes, and joy of my heart, let me love thee with all my mind, and with all my strength; because thy bowels are so wonderfully enlarged, and thou hast first loved me with an exceeding love.

And whence is this to me, that the Creator of heaven and earth, and of the great deep, to whom my goods cannot extend, cannot add anything,

should vouchsafe to love a creature of whom he hath no need? O wisdom, O word of God, which enablest the dumb to speak, open my mouth and inspire me with thy praise, that I may thankfully recount the benefits, which thou hast from the beginning conferred upon thy servant. My very being is from thy gift: I am, because thou madest me; and this was ordained by thee from all eternity; before the mountains were brought forth, or the great depths broken up; before the earth was fixed upon its foundations, or the heavens stretched out as a curtain; I was written in thy book, and numbered among thy creatures by an everlasting decree, a certain foresight of every thing that should be, long before it was.

And what, O merciful Father, and most mighty Creator, what could there be in me, to deserve, what to incline, thy glorious majesty, to make me? What indeed, since I was not? And thou madest me not a drop of water, a spark of fire, nor a bird or fish, not a brute or an insect, not a stone or a tree; not one of those creatures to whom thou hast imparted being without life; nor of those, who have life without sense: nor yet of those who have sense without reason: but a creature superior to all those; *a little lower than the angels*, (Ps. viii. 5.) because partaker of an intelligent spirit, common to man with them, by thy merciful distribution, and most wise appointment. But still *a little lower than the angels*, because they are happy in that knowledge of thy glories, which they attain by sight, but I by faith and hope only; they see thee *face to face*, I *darkly through a glass*; they *know thee fully*, I as yet but *in part*. (1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12.)

CHAP. V.

The Excellency of Man's Future State.

THIS is my present condition, but this condition will not last always. For *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away*; (1 Cor. xiii. 10.) then shall we *with open face behold the glory of the Lord, and be changed ourselves into the same image of him we behold*. What shall then hinder us from being no longer *a little lower than the angels*, whom thou hast already crowned with hope, and shalt then crown *with glory and honour*, (Ps. viii. 5.) whom thou delightest to honour as thy friends and favourites, and advancest to a dignity and happiness in all points like theirs? Thus hath thy truth declared, that they *who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, are equal to the angels, and are the children of God*. (Luke xx. 34, 36.) Children of God, in the most beneficial and exalted sense, if equal to the angels; and therefore sons of God, because the son of God was made the son of man. The consideration of this mystery gives me the confidence to say, not only that man is little lower than the angels, not only that he is equal to the angels, but that in some respects he is even superior to the angels; in that man, not angel, is God; and God vouchsafed to be made, not angel, but man.

This honour done to our nature gives man a prerogative above any other creature whatsoever; For the *word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God*; (John i.) that word which said, *let there be light and there was light*; (Gen. i. 3.) (by which created light some understand those intellectual spirits the angels) that word, by which God made all things in the beginning, *was*

made flesh, and dwelt in us, and we have seen his glory. (John. i. 14.) This is that glory, in which I glory: this the joy in which I rejoice. I acknowledge, therefore, O Lord, my life, my joy and glory, that in making me a creature capable of reason, thou hast made me in some regard equal to the angels; because this gives me a capacity of being made perfect by thy word, and receiving the adoption of sons by thy only begotten Son; that *beloved Son in whom thou art well pleased;* (Mat. iii. 17.) thy consubstantial coeternal heir, Jesus Christ our only Lord and Redeemer; our enlightener and comforter, our *advocate with the Father.* (1 John ii. 2.) Our life, and Saviour, and only hope, who loved us more tenderly than his own body, *by whom we have boldness and access with confidence to thee,* (Eph. iii. 12.) because *he hath given us power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe in his name.* (John i. 12.)

I will magnify thy name, O Lord, for that by creating me in thy own image after thy likeness, (Gen. i. 26.) thou hast given me a capacity of such excellent glory, as to become a child of God. This is an honour of which trees and stones, and all the vegetable and sensitive world, whether of creatures in the air, or earth, or sea, are totally excluded. To whom thou hast not granted the power of becoming thy children, because they are not endued with reason. For in that reason by which we attain to the knowledge of God, does this capacity consist; and therefore man alone is happy in it, because resembling his heavenly Father in the dignity and perfections of a rational soul. Thus to thy favour and goodness I owe my being a man, and to a yet higher degree of the same goodness, that, being man by nature, I am qualified for becoming thy child by grace; which no other of the creatures in this lower world can be.

And whence is this to me, thou universal Author and Maker of every creature ; whence, that I should be so signally honoured above the rest of the works of thy hands ? thou art the same from and to all eternity, and didst in time create all things in the space of six days. Man and beasts, stones and trees, were produced together. No antecedent merits of their own contributed to that production ; for how could they deserve, who as yet were not ? It was of thy goodness alone that they had a being communicated to them, and all in this respect were equal, that all were alike undeserving. How came it then to pass, that this creature, whom thou enduest with reason, should receive such a peculiar, such abundant marks of thy love ? Why were not they advanced to the same level with me, or I at least thrust down to the same with them ? Had I any right, any pretence at all, to that glorious privilege of being made capable of this Divine sonship ? Far be it from me, Lord, to entertain so vain a thought. No, no, it was thy goodness, thy free grace alone, that made this distinction so much to my advantage ; that I might see, and feel, and taste, and partake largely of thy mercy. And therefore by that grace, which thus appeared so liberally in thy first creation, I humbly implore thee to make me a new creature ; and grant me grace to be duly thankful for the infinite goodness thus extended to me.

CHAP. VI.

Of the almighty Power of God.

THY mighty hand, at all times and upon all occasions the same, created angels in heaven, and worms upon earth ; nor was the one of these operations less a demonstration of thy omnipo-

tence than the other. For as no hand but thine could give being to creatures so noble as the angels, so none but thine could frame the vilest insect. Thine only could spread out the firmament, thine only could produce the least spire of grass: thine only could fashion these wonderful bodies of ours, thine only make the least hair of our heads white or black: for to that power which knows no bounds, all things are not only possible, but are equally so.

To thee there is the same difficulty in making a worm, as an angel; to thee the same ease in creating the whole heaven, as a single leaf; the colouring a hair, and compacting a body, are the same thing, and the Almighty finds no difference between hanging the earth upon the waters, and supporting the waters by dry ground. *Whatever pleased him was done in heaven and in earth, and in the sea, and in all deep places*; (Ps. cxxxv. 6.) and done exactly as it pleased him. He made them all, and me among the rest, according to the excellency of his wisdom and skill, and power, and good pleasure. Thy hand, hadst thou thought fit, could have made me a stone, or a bird, or a serpent, or any of the brutal kind; but such was thy goodness, that it would not. If then, I would be satisfied why I am none of these, but a creature by far more excellent than all these; no other answer can be returned to that question but this, that thy wondrous goodness was pleased thus to order it, and that it did thus order without any consideration on my part to deserve, or any way incline thee to grant me such preference above the creatures of lower attainments, and less honourable station.

How shall I therefore praise thee, most mighty Lord? How shall I be able to contribute to thy glory, who could contribute nothing to my own existence? Let thy own works magnify thee, ac-

cording to the greatness and multitude of thy power and mercies. Thy praise is too vast to be comprehended by thought, exprest by words, or heard by any mortal ear. These all are finite, and pass away ; but thy glory is infinite, and the praise of it endureth for ever. Our thoughts begin, and soon come to an end, our words form different sounds, and vanish into air, our ear receives impression of those sounds, and quickly loses them again ; but thy praise is fixed, and abideth to all eternity.

What mortal man then is sufficient to *tell thy noble acts, or set forth all thy praise* ? (Ps. cvi. 2.) He praises thee indeed, who acknowledges himself unable to praise thee. We only praise thee in, and by thyself, and all our praise is in thee. Then have we true praise, when thou approvest thy own works in us : when we seek it from any other, we lose true praise ; for that is transitory, thine eternal, and as oft as the transitory is grasped at, the eternal slips away from us. Let me therefore love and seek thee alone, from whom is true and lasting praise. Give me thyself, and so shall I be able to praise thee ; for, what am I without thee, but dust and ashes, a dead dog, a loathsome carcase, and how should death and corruption praise *the God of the spirits of all flesh, that inhabiteth eternity* ? (Numb. xvi. 22 ; Isa. lxvii. 15.)

Can darkness praise light, and death life ? Yet such is the difference between thee and me. Thou art light, I am darkness : Thou art life, I am death : Thou an eternal substance, I vanity and nothing. And can a mortal man, who to-day is, and to-morrow is not, praise him that endures the same for ever ? Can rottenness and worms add to the glory of the great God ? Can he that is conceived and born and brought up in sin, praise that holiness whose pure eyes cannot behold iniquity ?

No, my God, let thy own incomprehensible power and wisdom, and goodness, thy boundless mercy and unspeakable clemency ; let these, for these alone are qualified to set forth thy praises : even that almighty power, and infinite love, by which thou hast created me to natural, and regenerated me to spiritual life, O God, the life of my soul.

CHAP. VII.

A Prayer for the Divine Grace and Protection.

I WILL therefore rejoice under the shadow of thy wings, and hope in thy goodness, which first gave me being. Thy bounty made me, let it also help me ; preserve that creature which thy goodness made from perishing in its own wickedness and misery. For how am I the better for being made, if I be suffered to sink into my own corruption ? *Hast thou, my God, created man for nought ? Despise not then the work of thy own hands ;* but govern and preserve it. Thou madest me out of nothing, and if thou leavest me destitute of thy protection, I shall quickly return to nothing. For as I was not, when thou first commandest me into being, so unless thou be pleased to assist and support me, there is that principle of destruction in me, which will soon make me not to be again.

Help me, therefore, thou God of my life, that I perish not. Hadst thou not made me, I had never been at all : because thou madest me, I am what I am ; but if thou preserve me not, I am no more. Let then that love, which prevailed with thee to give me being, prevail also for the governance and preservation of that being. Save what thou hast created, and complete thy mercy ; for better were it never to have created me, than to create me for sin and destruction. The benefit I ask is not less than that vouchsafed already :



thy love is still the same, for thou hatest nothing that thou hast made, and art the same kind God, even love itself. *Thy hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither thy ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but my iniquities have separated me and my God,* (Isa. lix. 1, 2.) between darkness and light, between the shadow of death and life, between falsehood and truth; between my perishing and thy enduring and everlasting substance.

CHAP. VIII.

A Prayer against evil Desires.

THESE are the thick shades of night, with which I am encompassed in the dark dungeon of this mortal body, till the *day dawn, and the day star arise in my heart.* (2 Pet. i. 19.) O that thy powerful voice would issue that irresistible command, *Let there be light!* so should darkness disperse from off the face of the deep, so the *dry land appear,* (Gen. i. 2, 3.) and bring forth abundantly, the green herb, and the fruit of righteousness after his kind. O Father of life, leave me not under the power of wicked imaginations, nor give me a proud look: but turn away from thy servant an haughty mind and vain concupiscence, and possess my heart with thy grace, that I may serve and always think on thee with reverence and godly fear. (Ecclus. xxiii. 4, 5.)

Enlighten my eyes that they may see thee, and not exalt themselves; but gaze with humble wonder on the things that are too high to be thoroughly perceived: and fix my sight and desires on the blessings of thy right, and not on those of thy left hand. Attract my heart with that goodness thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, that I may love thee with everlasting love; and not wander after vain objects, and, blinded with their deceitful appearance, *put bitter for sweet,*

and sweet for bitter; darkness for light, and light for darkness; (Isa. v. 20.) but that by thy gracious guidance and mighty protection, I may be safely led, and escape those manifold snares, which the subtle nature of our common enemy, lays every where in our way to catch unwary souls: of which he who wisely had {considered our danger, hath given us this fair warning, *All that is in the world, is the lust of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life.* (1 John ii. 16.)

Since then every place is so thick set with snares, and every step we take so full of hazard, who shall be able to promise himself safety? Surely none but he whom thou securest from the *desire of the eyes*, by taking from him a *proud look*; none but he, whom thou defendest against the lust of the flesh, by turning from him vain concupisence; none but he whom thou hast made proof against the *pride of life*, by delivering him from a haughty and insolent and profane *mind*. Happy the man who is thus armed, thus protected; *His enemies shall not be able to do him violence, the son of wickedness shall not hurt him,* (Ps. lxxxix. 22.)

I beg thee, therefore, O my Redeemer, for thy own mercie's sake, let me not fall into the snares laid for me, nor give the adversary occasion to triumph in my ruin. *Let my God arise, and let his enemies be scattered, yea, let them which hate him flee before him. Like as the smoke vanisheth, so do thou drive them away; and like as the wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God.* (Ps. lxxviii. 1, 2.) Thou, Lord, art the Father of the fatherless, hear the cry of thy desolate and helpless children. *Sleep not, nor slumber, O thou keeper of Israel*, for the watchful enemy that labours *Israel's* destruction, doth neither slumber nor sleep. (Ps. cxxi. 4.)

O Light, before which all other light is dark,

ness, which no night can damp, no obstruction intercept, no blindness shut out; thou that enlightenest every thing in every part, at once and always receive me in thy brightness, that I may see thee in thyself, and myself in thee, and all things else under thee. If thou withdraw thy shining, the clouds of my ignorance gather, and I am overwhelmed with sin and error. All is black, all evil without thee: for what can possibly be good, which is destitute of thee, the true, the chief, the only good?

I know, O Lord, and acknowledge, that besides thee alone not only all without, but all within me, is misery and want. And otherwise than wretched I cannot be, when distracted by the vast variety of worldly objects, and drawn off from thee, the one supreme good. I pursue first one, and then another, but cannot meet with satisfaction from any: I starve in the midst of plenty, and am but mocked with the empty pomp of a feast, when my soul feeds on any thing but thee; for thou alone canst satisfy my hunger, assuage my pains, and fill my large desires.

How wretched, doubly wretched, is that soul, which forsakes thee, with whom is fulness and joy, to follow the world, where it is sure to suffer poverty and pain? The world cries out, I cannot satisfy thee; thou sayest, eat and let thy soul be satisfied; and yet (such is the perverseness of my appetite) I follow after that which cannot, and forsake that which can and would content me. Correct, O spiritual physician, this disorderly eagerness for trash, and help me to relish the wholesome food of souls: and to *labour for that meat which endureth to everlasting life.* (John vi. 27.)

The great things thou hast done for me already encourage me to ask and hope for more. I was not, and thou gavest me being; I was lost and thou hast restored me; dead and thou hast raised

me ; thou endurest death to purchase my life ; and though the King of heaven, deliverest up thy person to ransom the least and most unworthy of thy subjects, thy blood was not thought a price too dear for my redemption, and I may truly say, that in some sense, thou lovedst me better than thyself, since thou wert content to die for my sake. By so gracious a covenant, by so precious a ransom, am I redeemed from slavery and exile, from punishment and death. And that the remembrance of such astonishing mercies might be for ever fresh and present with me, thou hast called me by thy name, marked me for thy own with thy blood, anointed me with that oil of the Holy Spirit, with which thyself wast anointed, and distinguished me with the most honourable of all titles, that of *Christian*. (1 John ii. 20.) Thus have thy grace and mercy all along prevented me. And infinite are the dangers from which thou hast delivered me. Thou hast been my guide and teacher, when I strayed through ignorance ; my reprover and corrector when I offended through carelessness or presumption ; my comfort in trouble, my support in despair ; when I fell, thou tookest me up ; when I stood, it was because thou upheldest me ; when I advanced, thou conducted me ; when I approached, thou receivedst me ; when I slept, thou didst guard me ; when I cried, thou didst hear and answer me.

CHAP. IX.

Of God's seeing all the Actions and Intentions of Men.

THESE and innumerable other mercies I thankfully ascribe to thee, my God, and recollect with such a sensible delight, that I could dwell upon them for ever ; and wish to speak and think of thee alone ; to love thee with all my

heart, and mind, and strength, and with every faculty and part of my soul and body be constantly employed in praising thee. O how blessed are those pious men who can rejoice in thee! But thou, my God, seest all my imperfections, and how far distant I am from this happiness. Thy eyes are a thousand times more piercing than the sun, penetrating the deepest and darkest recesses, and watching continually *in every place to behold the evil and the good.* (Prov. xv. 3.)

For thou, who fillest and governest all things, hast a constant regard to the work of thy own hands: hadst thou not loved thy creatures, thou hadst not made them; and the same love which made, will always continue to guide, and preserve, and watch over them. Thus thou art ever present with me, always marking well my goings, and numberest all my steps: thou standest over me as a watchful centinel, and observest me as nicely as if all care of every thing besides had been dismissed. and I remained the only object of thy concern; for so entire, so unalterable is the perfection of thy sight and knowledge, that it is neither more exact being confined to one object, nor at all perplexed or confused by taking into view the most distant and even innumerable. Because as thou considerest the whole with all its parts in one distinctly, so dost thou see all, though never so many, never so different, never so remote; and seest them all together, with one and the same act of thy whole Divine knowledge. This is of such unbounded comprehension, so incapable of being separated in its own operations, or distracted with variety of objects, that one and many are the same, and both understood and observed alike, because falling alike under the same undivided and entire wisdom, which applies the whole of itself to the consideration of each and every thing.

And thus I ought to believe myself, and every thing belonging to me, as much under thy eye, as if thy providence had no other care : for thou art always present, always ready, if thou do but find me so. Wheresoever I go, thou goest along with me, except I first forsake and fall from thee. Wherever I am, thou abidest with me ; for thou art every where ; that I may find thee upon every remove, and so subsist by thee ; for otherwise I must perish, not being able to subsist without thee. I must acknowledge, then, that every thing I do is done in thy presence : thou understandest every action, and the nature of it, much better than even I who am the doer of it. For let me do what I will, and when I will, still thou art present at all times equally ; an incessant observer of all my views and intentions, my inclinations and inward complacencies, my words and actions. So good reason have I to cry out with *David*, *Lord, thou knowest all my desire, and understandest my thoughts afar off.* (Ps. xxxviii. 9 ; cxxxix. 2.)

Thou seest how the Spirit moves me, whence it comes, where it rests, and whither it tends ; because thou art the *weigher of spirits*. The outward act, like a well-leaved tree, may be fair and flourishing, and impose upon the eyes of men ; but the all-seeing Judge goes deeper, he examines the sap and root thoroughly. If this be rotten or bitter, if the intentions be corrupt, he deals with the tree according to its root, and recompenses the man after the bent of his heart. The evil that he would do is punished, and the good he endeavoured and heartily desired to do, but could not, is as kindly accepted as if it had been actually accomplished. Thou seest, as soon as I begin to move, what I would be at ; what I design and delight in ; thy ears and eyes are ever open ; thou attendest diligently, and enterest punctually into thy book, whatever I do, whether it be good,

or whether it be evil, that the one may receive a bountiful reward, the other its deserved punishment. And this shall surely be *when the books shall be opened, and all mankind shall be judged out of the things which are written in those books, according to their works.* (Rev. xx. 12.)

Thus may we understand what is said of thee, that thou *searchest out all perfection*; because in human actions thou hast a greater regard to what we wish and intend to do, than to what we really do. And when I seriously consider, that this is the method by which thou proceedest, shame and confusion, fear and horrible dread, sink my spirits; to think how holy and upright, how pure and sincere, all our intentions and behaviour ought to be, since we do every thing in the sight of our Judge; a Judge on whom no disguise can impose, but who does not only see our actions, but perfectly discern our most secret thoughts.

CHAP. X.

The Impotence of Human Nature to resist Temptations, without the Assistance of Divine Grace.

O LORD, *the God of the spirits of all flesh,* (Num. xvi. 22.) whose eyes are upon all the ways of the sons of men, from the very instant of their entrance into this world, to that of their departure out of it, that thou mayest render to every man according to his doings; bring me, I beseech thee, acquainted with myself, that I may be truly sensible of my weakness and my wants: I have indeed presumed to say, but they were but vain boasts, that *I was rich, and stood in need of nothing; while, alas! I was poor and blind, and naked and miserable, and weak.* (Rev. iii. 17.) Thus I thought myself something, when in truth I was nothing; and *professing myself to be wise I became*

a fool; (Rom. i. 22, 23.) I arrogated the little good I had to my own wisdom and diligence, but thou hast undeceived my partial mistakes, and convinced me now effectually that every excellence is entirely thy gift, (Jam. i. 17.) that *without thee we can do nothing*; (John xv. 5.) and as the psalmist well observes, *except thou, Lord, art pleased to keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain*. (Ps. cxxvii. 1.) Thou hast taught me experimentally, of how little significance human strength and industry are, by leaving me for a while destitute of thy help, and bringing my supposed abilities to the proof. Not for thy better information, who knowest me perfectly before, but in order to the creating in me right notices of myself; and abating that unjust esteem I entertained for qualifications not yet understood. For it is true, my God, I did not only think myself something, but that my being so, was owing to myself, and that my own strength was security sufficient; nor did I discover, that my safety was the effect of thy guidance and protection, till thou thoughtest fit to withdraw thyself for a season, and sufferedst me to fall for want of thy support. By this event, alas! I had but too sensible and too sad a demonstration, that all I did commendably before was the effect of thy gracious governance; that my misery and my fall was properly my own; but my recovery and my standing, thine and only thy doing.

Thus hast thou in mercy opened my eyes, and awakened me out of my deceitful dream; by letting me see, that *man is appointed to a state of warfare upon earth*, (Job xiv. 1.) that dangers and temptations beset him every where, that no flesh can have whereof to glory before God, in hope to be justified in the sight of their almighty Judge; since whatever good thing we have to do, be the proportion less or more, still the whole is

thy gift, and nothing truly our own but our sins and our miseries. And what shall man then find to glory of? Of his sins and miseries? That were most absurd, a cause of shame and sorrow, but none for boasting or self-satisfaction. What then? of any good? No, not that neither; for this is equally absurd, to glory of that which is not our own, but another's. For thine, O Lord, is all the good, and consequently thine all the glory. He that assumes to himself the honour of the good that is thine, the same is a thief and a robber; and thus far resembles the devil himself, that he would usurp upon the majesty and property of his Master. He that is ambitious of praise for thy gifts, and aims not at promoting thy honour, but his own, how profuse soever men may be in their commendations of him, yet thou wilt be sure to reproach and condemn him for his arrogance and injustice. And what shall the praise of men then profit him? For though they extol never so much, yet if thou disapprove, they shall not be able to defend him when thou sittest in judgment, nor to deliver him from vengeance, when thy awful voice shall pass the fatal sentence upon him.

Therefore, O Lord, who hast formed and sustained me from my mother's womb, suffer me not, I implore thee, to fall under that condemnation, of attempting to steal away any part of thy glory. Thine is all the good, and fit it is that thine should be all the honour of it. To me belongs only confusion of face, and misery unspeakable; for mine is all the evil, and of that evil this must be the consequence, unless thy mercy interpose and rescue me. But thou, my Lord, wilt have mercy; thy mercy extends to all thy works, and thou hatest nothing that thou hast made; thou impartest to us of thy own goodness, and enrichest us with many excellent gifts; having declared thyself a lover of the poor, and a provider for their

necessities out of thy hid treasures. Behold we are poor, we are thy needy children, thy little flock ; open to us thy gates, that *the poor may eat and be satisfied, and the heart of them that seek thee, may praise thee and live for ever.* For I am taught, that none of they who see, and acknowledge, and lament their poverty, shall be enriched by thee ; while the rich and great in their own conceits, (who are in reality the least and most wretchedly indigent of all others) shall be sent empty away, and left to perish in their supposed sufficiency. (Luke vi. 20 ; Ps. xxii. 26 ; Luke i. 52, 53 ; xiv. 11 ; Matt. v. 3.)

In a due sense of this dispensation, I most humbly confess my spiritual poverty ; that I have nothing of my own ; and, if any good action have been done by me, the honour of it is entirely thine, because the good itself was thy gift. I do look upon myself to be no better than vanity, a mass of corruption, a dark and empty creature, a barren soil, not able, without the fructifying dew of thy blessing, to bring forth any fruit, but the venomous and noisome weeds of shame, and sin, and death. If I have any good disposition, it is of thy infusing ; if I have persevered in doing well, it is because thy strength enabled me ; if I fell off from a good course, it was because thy grace did not preserve me : and in each of those relapses I had lain and been lost for ever, had not thy mighty hand raised me out of that dust of death. Thy light alone delivered me from blindness, thy defence from temptations, thy support from relapses, and thy continual governance from final misery and ruin irrecoverable.

Thus hath thy goodness, O my God, prevented me in all the events and exigencies of my life : rescuing me out of past evils, sustaining and defending me against the present, and arming me against the future. Hewing in pieces the nets

and snares laid to entrap my soul, and taking out of the way the occasions and allurements to sin, which hadst thou not done for me, there is not in the world a crime so black, but I might have been guilty of it. For this I know, O Lord, that there is no sin ever committed by any one man, which any other man is not capable of committing too, if that almighty power which made him man, be not at hand with its assistance. But what I could not do for myself, thou hast vouchsafed in much mercy to do for me: thou laidst upon me thy commands, and didst signify what I ought to abstain from: thou gavest to these commands the sanction of promises and threatenings, and to thy grace alone I ascribe my believing the one and the other. Thou hast governed and preserved me to thee and to myself; and by thy seasonable and happy restraints I have been kept from adultery, murder, blasphemy, and every heinous violation of thy laws, which otherwise had provoked thy displeasure, and certainly incurred my own damnation.

Sometimes there was no tempter to persuade me to do amiss; and that there was no such at hand, was the effect of thy merciful providence. At other times the tempter was ready, and had done his part, but for want of fit time and place the temptation could not take effect: this also was from the same good providence. At others, he laid the bait, place was convenient, opportunity was inviting, and then, by thy restraining grace, I was withheld from complying with his black and deceitful allurements. Sometimes he made his approaches in the dark, black and loathsome as he is; and thy assistance enabled me to discover and detest his deformities. Sometimes *the strong man armed* attacked me with open force, and hoped to carry me by terror and storm; and in

these conflicts thou hast so powerfully restrained him, and strengthened me, that I have not only stood the shock, but come off conqueror. (Luke xi. 21.) Sometimes he hath accosted me in a bright and beautiful figure, and *transformed himself into an angel of light*; (2 Cor. xi. 14.) and thou hast rebuked him, and opened my eyes in time to detect his borrowed disguises. For this is the red dragon, the old serpent, called the devil and Satan, *having seven heads, and ten horns*; (Rev. xii. 13.) the great *Leviathan*, whom thou hast made to take his pastime upon the vast ocean of this world, *wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts*; (Psal. civ. 25.) that is, several kinds of evil spirits, working mischief day and night, and *going about continually, seeking whom they may devour*. (1. Pet. v. 8.) And devour they certainly will, except thou, the great shepherd of souls, deliver the prey out of their hungry jaws.

This is he, who appeared in the form of a serpent in paradise, whose *tail drew down a third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth*; (Gen. iii. 1; Rev. xii. 4.) who poisons the waters, that men may drink of the envenomed liquor and die, *who trusteth that he can draw up Jordan in his mouth, and is made without fear*. (Job xl. 23; xli. 33.) And, who can defend himself from his greedy ravings, except thou, Lord, deliver him, who breakest the heads of the great dragon! (Ps. lxxiv. 13.) Do thou therefore help and protect us, hide us under the shadow of thy wings, and shield us from the force of the monster's horns. For this is his constant employment, this his only desire and endeavour, to destroy and swallow up the souls which thou hast made.

To thee, therefore, our God, we flee; to thee we

ery for defence against our daily and our deadly foe; who, whether we sleep or wake, whether we eat or drink, or whatever else we are employed about, is night and day making war against us, by cunning stratagems and a thousand unconceivable arts of delusion. Sometimes in open field, sometimes from private ambuscades aiming his poisoned darts at us, that he may slay our souls. And yet, so wretchedly stupid, so perversely mad are we, that though we know and see this fierce dragon is ever making at us with open mouth, still we can fold our hands to sleep, indulge ourselves in ease and sloth, and wantonly sport upon the brink of ruin, as if no danger threatened us. His constant endeavour is our destruction, and upon this he is so eagerly intent, as never to slumber or sleep: we in the meanwhile sleep secure, and will not so much as be awakened into one serious thought of our chief, our everlasting concern. And what, alas! must needs become at last, of creatures whom the enemy uses so much industry to destroy, and they so very little to preserve themselves.

For infinite, God knows, are our hazards, and all our way is spread so thick with traps and toils that we cannot tread one step where there is not some net laid for our souls. And whose wisdom and care is sufficient to escape them all? snares in our plenty, and snares in our poverty: snares in our company, and snares in our most private retirements: snares in our pleasures, and the ordinary refreshments of life, and snares in our very fastings, and most mortifying austerities. Abroad or at home, asleep or awake, we are never safe, but every word and action, every thought and design is hazardous and ensnaring. Such is our condition, and so manifold our danger. But do thou, Lord, deliver us from the toils of the hunter, that we may give thanks unto thy name,

saying with the holy psalmist, *If the Lord himself had not been on our side, our enemies had swallowed us up quick: But praised be the Lord, who hath not given us over as a prey unto their teeth. Our soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, the snare is broken, and we are delivered.* (Ps. cxxiv. 1. 3. 6, 7.)

Do thou, O gracious God, my life and light, in order to completing this deliverance, enlighten my eyes, that I may see thy light, and walk in it. For who can escape the snares he does not see? and who can see them, except thou open his eyes, and direct his unwary steps? The prince of darkness works in the dark, and spreads his nets unseen; and the children of darkness fall into them, because destitute of thy light, in which whosoever walketh, walketh safely. *For if any man walketh in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.* (John xi. 19.) Now thou, my God, art the light which alone can guide us; thou art the light of the children of light, the day that never declines, and they who walk in thee, tread sure and safe, but they who want thee, are still in the thickest night, and know not whither they go.

This is most manifest from daily experience, that the farther any man wanders from thee, the more he is bewildered in the night of ignorance and error, of sin and confusion; and the more gross the darkness about him is, the less he is capable of discerning his danger; the oftener he is entangled the deeper he falls, and is not sensible that he does so. And how should he be solicitous to rise again, who does not perceive the necessity of such an attempt, but fondly thinks he stands, even when he falls most desperately? how shall that patient ever find a cure, who hath no apprehension of his disease? so great occa-

sion have I to be importunate with thee, my God, and light, that thou shouldest enlighten my eyes, and shew me the true state of my case, that I may see my way, and rightly apprehend my danger, and not be overthrown before my cruel adersaries. For our common enemy intends no less than our utter destruction: he is a robber from the beginning, and such he will continue to the end of the world. (Is. xiv. 12.) He first formed a design of invading thy glory, and, for a punishment of that unjust and sacrilegious pride, was cast out of thy holy mountain. And now, since that fall from heaven, he still carries on his wicked designs with indefatigable industry and malice, labouring with all his might to undermine thy children; and in implacable despite to thee, to destroy the creature honoured above the rest, by being made after thy own image, and designed to inherit that glory with thyself, from which he by his proud presumption fell. But, O thou shepherd of *Israel*, break in pieces the head of this ravening wolf, let him not tear and devour thy tender lambs, but lead thy flock safely, and conduct them at last to thyself. *Thou knowest his goings out, and his coming in, and his rage against us:* (Isa. xxxvii. 28.) thou seest through all his cunning disguises, and canst with ease detect his subtlest devices. Nor do I mention these to inform thee of them, for thou knowest all things, and the secretest imaginations are not hid from thee: but I lament my danger and my own disability, that thou, my Judge, mayest see how sensible I am of both, that thy compassion may come in to my assistance, and disappoint our enemy and thine, and save those souls whose strength thou art alone.

Our enemy is wondrous crafty, and his contrivances are so disguised, that except thou open our eyes, we cannot easily discover what it is he

aims at, nor distinguish this deadly foe from a very affectionate friend. For he conveys himself into every place, and is dexterous beyond what is possible to conceive, at putting on all manner of shapes. Sometimes he appears like himself, a raging wolf, or a black fiend ; at other times he seems a meek and gentle lamb, and is transformed into an angel of light. He watches all our motions, observes what posture our affairs are in, and accommodates his temptations to the humour, the occasions, the events and fortunes of each person ; he considers the times, the places, the critical junctures, in which these are most likely to prevail, and is sure to fall in with those, that are most favourable to his mischievous purposes. He counterfeits melancholy, that he may delude the sorrowful and dejected ; and jollity, that he may betray the sprightly and gay ; he wears sheeps clothing, that he may deceive the secure ; and all the savage fierceness of the wolf, that he may terrify the fearful. Thus does he manage matters with such fatal address, that some are scared with *terrors by night*, and others wounded with *the arrows that fly by day*, others tainted with the secret *pestilence of lusts that walk in darkness*, and others destroyed by the open profaneness and impudent vices that *waste at noon day*. (Ps. xci. 5, 6.) And who is sufficient for these things ? What prudence, what caution can be a match for such intricate impostures ? Who can *discover the face of his garment, or bridle up the teeth* of this tyrannical *Leviathan* ?

Behold he hides his arrows secretly in his quiver, and hits us suddenly, when we are least in fear. While he covers his hook with specious baits, and sets his traps out of sight, he draws us into misery and death, by false appearances of happiness, and under the pretence of kindness and friendship : and these things pass upon us

very easily, unless thou, Lord, help us to pull off the mask, and detect his slight of hand with which the crafty juggler deludes our credulous sight. Were we in danger only from acknowledged vice, and the works of the flesh, the matter were not so hard to guard ourselves against. But, alas! he turns our own artillery upon us, and hath a thousand ways of compassing us, ends and our destruction; by our very virtues and graces, by our devotions and most spiritual exercises. And this is properly to transform himself into an angel of light, when he makes us ten times more the children of hell, by perverting those very methods which seem to have the most direct tendency to heaven. These, and innumerable other stratagems, to me unknown, this son of *Belial* finds out, and in some or other of them is perpetually exercising himself to our eternal mischief; but do thou, O Lord, *hew the snares of the ungodly in pieces*, and let him not triumph over us, *Let him fall into his own nets*, and let me ever escape them; that he may gnash with his teeth, and consume away with envy and rage, at the perishing of his own desires, and thou mayest be glorified in our preservation, *O thou who art the saviour of all that put their trust in thee, thou that savest by thy right hand.* (Ps. cxli. 10; xvii. 7.)

CHAP. XI.

The manifold Goodness of God, and what Improvement we should make of it.

THIS I request with greater confidence upon every remembrance of thy favour already vouchsafed to me. And therefore behold thy servant and son of thy handmaid, acknowledging with all humility, and thankfully recounting the many mercies, with which thou hast prevent-

ed, preserved, and particularly blessed me from my youth up to this very day. Herein I exercise myself the rather in a due sense and detestation of ingratitude how odious a sin it is in itself, and how very displeasing to thee. For this is the ruin of all that is good : the dam that stops the current of thy mercy, else ever overflowing upon mankind : The seeds of vice, though killed by this, revive and sprout up afresh in our hearts, and the most thriving virtues, where this baleful quality enters, are immediately poisoned and stunted, grow sickly, fade away and die. Therefore I will give thanks to my God, that I fall not into this miserable state, nor lie under the dangerous influence and indelible reproach of a sin, so malignant in its quality and effect as that of ingratitude.

O Lord my deliverer ! how often hath the *roaring lion* opened his mouth upon me, and thou hast drawn me from between his teeth, by quashing the temptation ? How often have I wickedly complied, and done the fact, and he stood ready to carry off his prey, but thou hast defended me from the hell I have deserved : thus my offences against thee were repaired by the manifestations of thy power and goodness in the defence of me. I was not afraid, nor stood in awe of thee, and thou didst keep a strict and impregnable guard for my preservation. I departed from thee, and surrendered myself to the enemy : thou wouldest not suffer him to take the advantage, nor me to be ruined ; even by my own act and deed. These benefits my gracious God conferred, and yet so blind was I, as not to see them. For after this manner hast thou snatched my soul from him, that would have torn it in pieces, and rescued me from eternal destruction, when I was not in the least sensible how near I was to it. I have ventured to the very brink of the precipice,

and thou hast plucked me back when dropping into it. I was at the very gates of death, and thou hast restrained the grave from shutting her mouth upon me.

Nor hath the care of this kind providence been confined only to my soul, my body also hath felt its good effects. For often hast thou, my God and Saviour, restored me from the bed of languishing, healed those diseases which had baffled all human skill, preserved and protected me by sea and land, in perils of fire and sword, shielding me from many a sore thrust, and putting by deaths innumerable, which were levelled at my head: standing over, and covering me with the shadow of thy wings, from all manner of hurt and danger. And this thou didst, as I have reason to believe, in great compassion to my poor soul, considering how unprovided I was for so important a change; and that, had I been then hurried out of the world, hell and eternal misery must have been my portion. So that thy grace and mercy, thus preventing me, have rescued me from a twofold death, and secured body and soul at once, by the same suspension of the fatal stroke; and by thus lengthening out my life, laid a foundation for my living to all eternity. These, and many other benefits I have received at thy bounteous hand, and I, stupid wretch, regarded not; nay, was so blind as not to see them, till the light from above opened my eyes. But now, thou God of my life, by whom I live; thou light of my eyes, by which I see; I have received the influence of thy bright beams, and am brought to a due sight and sense of thee and thy goodness; and most heartily return my thanks the best I can, though most disproportionate to the mercies, for which they are due. For thou only art my God and most merciful Creator, a lover of souls, and hating nothing that thou hast made: and I, alas! with

shame confess myself *the chief of sinners*, in whom thou hast shewn all long-suffering for a pattern to them, whose sinful and miserable state shall hereafter render them objects of thy clemency and compassion.

I acknowledge thy mercies to be unspeakably great, for *delivering my soul from the nethermost hell*; not once, or twice, or thrice, but hundreds, and thousands, and millions of times. I was perpetually driven thither, and thou as constantly checking my furious career, and turning me back again. And, had not thy own goodness loved me better than I loved myself, thou hadst, ere this, sunk me into the bottomless pit ten thousand times over. But such is thy tenderness, that thou **wilt not suffer us to undo ourselves, and makest as though thou sawest not our offences, that thy forbearance may win us to repentance.** So full of mercy are all thy ways, O God: which I now plainly perceive, and have a deep and grateful sense of, and am even lost in wonder and amazement at the kindness which hath all along watched over me for good, and saved both body and soul from the death which had otherwise long since swallowed them up. For I was entirely in the hands of death, and thou restoredst me entire to life. Thine therefore be the whole of this which lives by thy clemency, and every part of me conspires in offering every part of me, a sacrifice of praise. This whole spirit, and soul, and body, and all that life resulting from the mutual union of these, shall from henceforth be consecrated to the God of my life: for thou restoredst me all, that thou mightest keep me all for thy own: and therefore I will love my strength and my deliverer, and live no longer to myself, but thee. The whole of my life was lost and gone in misery; the whole was restored and given me afresh by thy mercy: for thou art a God full of *compassion, long-suffer-*

ing, plenteous in goodness and truth, and shewing mercy unto thousands in them that love thy name, (Psal. lxxxvi. 15; Exod. xx. vi.)

Now at length, O Lord my God, I plainly perceive the equity of that command, which enjoins me to *love thee with all my heart, and with all my mind, and with all my soul, and with all my strength, (Matt. xxii. 38.)* at all times, with a most ardent and never-ceasing affection: because I should perish each moment, didst not thou renew the gift of life by thy preservation and continuance of it, and every moment thou bindest me faster to thee, by the addition of new, and repetition of former benefits. As therefore no hour, no minute passes by, without some instance of thy bounty: so it is fit that none should pass, without my grateful and affectionate remembrances of so kind a benefactor; without such zealous and constant love of so good a God, as my frail nature, and narrow soul can extend to. This is indeed what ought to be, but yet it is what will not, cannot be, unless the same hand give the grace of gratitude, which gives the obligations to the duty: *for every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh down from above, and is from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (Jam. i. 17.)* And it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of thee who shewest mercy, that I must be enabled to love thee. Thine, Lord, is this gift, as thine is every thing that is good. Thou commandest that I should love thee, grant me the power to do whatsoever thou commandest, and then command whatsoever thou pleasest.

But still the more I reflect on thee, and on myself, the greater occasion I find to ask again and again, how is it possible for me to love thee to the degree that I ought, or where I shall meet with words to express the engagements I have to do so? If I look back to the first production of my nature,

the several privileges, by which thou hast distinguished mankind from all his fellow-creatures here below, are not only highly valuable, but even astonishing marks of thy favour. The honour of being formed after thy own image, those characters of the Divine excellences impressed upon the noble faculties of my soul, setting me far above the vegetable and merely sensible world, and approaching to the dignity of those intellectual spirits above; the angels that minister about thy throne, and are allowed to partake in the glories of thy beauteous presence, the ample provisions made for our convenience and delight, and that dominion man was invested with over the works of thy hands in these regions about him.

And what can I suppose thy wisdom designed by *putting all things in subjection under the feet of man*, (Psal. viii. 6.) but to teach him, that his subjection was reserved to thee alone: that he should devote himself entirely to thy service, whom so many other things were ordained to serve? For in this order the creation seems plainly to proceed. The things without us were framed for the use of our body, the body for the soul, the soul for thee; that, being freed from the distraction of serving any thing besides, thou mightest remain the only proper object of its care, while it possesses thee for its joy and happiness, and ultimate end, and creatures of a lower rank for its comfort and convenience, as means tending to the attainment of that end. For all contained within the compass of those bright orbs above us, are in their own nature, and in thy purpose, inferior to the human soul, and made subservient to that. But this was made so far like them, as to be subservient to some good above it too, that it might serve and grasp at that, and possess that which it would be exquisitely happy in the enjoyment of. And if it gets above the mean affections of such mutable things

as are unworthy of its chief concern, and fix its thoughts and desires on thee alone, it shall advance to a nearer resemblance of that supreme Perfection, whose likeness it wears, and be admitted to a clear vision of the Divine Majesty in immortal bliss. Then shall it be possessed securely of all those precious and inestimable treasures in the house of its Lord, with which if all we see and use to be fond of here, are put into the balance, they will be found *altogether deceitful upon the weights*, and *lighter than even vanity itself*. (Psal. lxii. 9.) These are the glories which thou wilt one day confer upon human souls; and in the meanwhile, by the prospect of them, thou dost support and fill thy saints with joy and comfort inexpressible.

Such large designs of happiness and glory might rather be thought just matter of wonder than of belief and expectation, were it not that in doing so much honour to man, thou dost it to thyself; and exaltest thy own likeness and copy, by receiving it into this union with its Divine original. Nor can I suffer myself to doubt, that any measure of kindness will be thought too great for the soul, when I reflect how much thou hast already shewn to this corruptible and viler part of us, the body: for even to every sense and organ of this thy liberality is admirable. The sun and moon are daily in attendance, and (in obedience to thy wise appointment) serve thy children by fixed and regular successions of heat and cold, of light and darkness. The brightness of the heavens thou hast given for an entertainment to our sight; the pure and subtle air for liberty of breathing; the difference of harmonious sounds to charm our ears; the fragrant perfumes to feast our smell; variety of relishes for our taste; and the tactile qualities of bodies to exercise our touch. Cattle of several sorts to assist us in our toils, and

lighten the labour of supporting life ; fowls of the air, fishes of the sea, and fruits of the earth for our sustenance and refreshment : plants and minerals, whose healing virtues may relieve the pains and distempers we are subject to ; and though thy wisdom hath thought fit to leave us liable to many and grievous bodily sufferings, yet thou hast furnished us with proper remedies to assuage or remove each of them. Such is the pity and love of Him who made us, and who knows our frame : the almighty Potter, in whose hand we are the clay, thus taking care to preserve the brittle vessels he hath made.

But while I am thus endeavouring to beget in my soul worthy apprehensions of thy bounteous mercy, pour, I beseech thee, from above the light of thy grace, which may enlarge the prospect, and from these little things below, get above the objects and the comforts of sense ; help me to make a right judgment of the great, the invisible above, which our great Creator hath prepared for our immortal spirits : for if my God be so solicitous for a thing so mean, and of so short and perishing a nature as this mortal body ; if the heavens and the air, seas and land, light and darkness, scorching heats and refreshing shades ; if showers and dew, winds and storms, fowls and fishes, beasts and vegetables ; if herbs and trees, the artful and the voluntary productions of the earth, do all conspire to serve us, and so assiduously perform their part to entertain us with a variety, that may render life not only supportable, but even delightful—what are the comforts, what the entertainments ? How great, how rich, how innumerable, how inconceivable, which thou hast prepared for them that love thee, in that heavenly country where they shall behold thee face to face ? If such provision be made for us in our prison, what may we expect to find in our palace ?

Great and marvellous are thy works, O King of heaven : for since all those things are exceeding pleasant and good, which thou hast imparted to good and evil men in common, how much better must we suppose those to be, which thou hast reserved as the portion peculiar to the good only? If thy gifts are so many, and so various, which at present thy enemies, as well as thy friends, have a share in, how noble and how unmeasurable, how deliciously sweet and charming must those needs be, which none but thy friends are thought worthy to partake of? If in our day of mourning there are so many comforts afforded us, what shall be our joys in the day of our nuptials? If our dungeon and our exile have so many refreshments, what shall be the felicities of our own home, the native soil of our souls, the magnificent court of the King of heaven? Surely, my God, no eye hath seen, or can see the things thou hast prepared for thy faithful and beloved, unless thou who hast prepared, do also vouchsafe to reveal them. For *as is thy majesty, so is thy mercy*, (Eccles. ii. 18.) and infinite is the *goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee*, (Psal. xxxi. 19.) infinite as thy own essential happiness, and the inexhaustible multitude of thy mercies.

For thou, O Lord, art great, incomprehensibly great, thy power knows no bounds, thy wisdom no number, thy kindness no measure ; neither do thy rewards and gracious gifts, which are in every respect worthy of, and of an extent equal to thyself. They must be so because thou thyself art the reward of thy saints, the hope of them that combat in this spiritual warfare, the crown of *them that strive lawfully*, (2 Tim. ii. 5.) and the joy and triumph of them that conquer.

CHAP. XII.

The Consideration of the Divine Goodness, our hope and comfort in Sufferings.

THESE, O my God, are the many, the mighty benefits, with which thou one day hast decreed to satisfy the wants and cravings of thy needy children. For thou art the hope of them, whom all other hopes have forsaken. Thou art the crown of glory which shall adorn every head that overcometh. Thou the eternal fulness of those blessed souls who hunger and thirst after thy righteousness and kingdom. Thou the never-failing comfort, communicating thyself to none but such as are content to forego, nay, have learnt to despise all worldly comforts in order to obtain thy everlasting and spiritual one in exchange. For they who set up their rest, and seek their satisfactions here, are reputed unworthy of those, thou hast reserved for thine elect hereafter. But they who are tormented here are comforted hereafter; and such as bear a part in the sufferings, shall not fail to obtain a share in the consolations, of their Lord and Saviour. For matters are so ordered by thy wisdom, that no man can have his joys and consolations here and hereafter both; God and mammon cannot both be served; to divide ourselves between them, is to lose all pretence of reward from either; and heaven and the world, spiritual and temporal, are objects so distant, things so incompatible, that he who resolves in good earnest to enjoy the one, is unavoidably obliged to give up all his pretensions to the other.

Upon these considerations my soul refuses to be comforted, and to find her happiness in this life, and rather chooses and begs of thee, my Lord and comforter, that these may be reserved for her fu-

ture and eternal state. Acknowledging it most equitable, that every one should lose thee, who prefers any other thing before thee. And therefore I make it my most earnest request, that thou wilt not suffer me to take up with any treacherous empty comforts, such as desert me when I stand in need of them: but rather give me a general disgust, and make all things besides bitter and loathsome to me, that my soul may delight itself in nothing but my God, whose charming sweetness is of that invincible efficacy, as even to sweeten the bitterest afflictions that can possibly befall man in this valley of tears and trouble.

Transported with the ravishing foretaste of this bliss, the first martyr St. *Steven* (Acts vii. 59.) received the showers of stones poured on him by his murderers with triumph. Thy apostles departed from the presence of the council, *rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus.* (Acts v. 41.) St. *Andrew* marched to his crucifixion without the least regret, because advancing to the possession of this bliss. The two great apostles submitted cheerfully to death, St. *Peter* by the cross, St. *Paul* by the sword. St. *Bartholomew* thought he made a prudent bargain when flayed alive, to purchase it with his skin. St. *John* drank up the poisoned cup without the least signs of fear. St. *Peter* long before, upon a taste of this unspeakable delight, cried out, *it is good for us to be here:* (Matt. xvii. 4.) we ask no other happiness. Such mighty efficacy had a drop of this sweetness to create a disrelish of all other pleasures: and what can we suppose would have been the transports of his soul, could he, while in the body, have drunk the fulness of thy cup overflowing with delights unspeakable? Some such antepast we may imagine vouchsafed to *David* when he cried out with holy zeal, *'O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that*

seek thee! and again, *O taste and see how gracious the Lord is!* (Ps. xxxi. 19; xxxiv. 8.) This is the blessedness we live in hope of: this we firmly believe thy bounty will one day bestow upon us; for this we fight under our Lord's banner against sin, the world, and the devil; for the sake of this we *are content to be killed all the day long*, in assurance that in thee, our life, we shall live for ever.

But, O thou hope of *Israel*, (Ps. xliv. 26.) and desire of my heart, after which I pant night and day, make haste and tarry not. Arise and come, and bring us out of prison, that we may give thanks unto thy name, and rejoice in the light of thy countenance. Let thine ears be open to the prayers of thy desolate orphans, and hold not thy peace at their tears; they cry to thee for their daily bread, that, by the strength of that they may be sustained in their travels, and happily conducted to the wished for-end of their journey, even to thy holy mountain. Among these, I, the least and most unworthy to be called thy son, lift up my heart and voice, confessing that I have no right to cry to my heavenly Father, nor any desert which might challenge admittance into thy house; but begging notwithstanding for thy own mercies' sake what nothing else can justify my asking, even that thy servant may not be confounded, which puts his trust in thee: for who shall enter *into thy sanctuary, there to behold thy power and glory*, (Ps. lxiii. 2.) unless thou open to him? And if thou open, who shall shut? *If thou break down it cannot be built again: and if thou shut up, there can be no opening. If thou withhold the waters they dry up: and if thou send them out, they overturn the earth.* (Job xii. 14, 15.) *If thou cut off*, and command all that thou hast made back into nothing again, *who shall controul or hinder thee?* (Job xi. 10.) Such is thy power, and no less is thy mercy, extending to every thing

to which thou givest being. And therefore we beseech thee, remember that we are a part of the world framed by thee, and preserve thy own workmanship. Vile earth though we are, thou art our Maker, despise not the vessels of thy own moulding. Ashes and worms cannot indeed aspire to the blissful regions of eternity ; but that power, which made all things out of nothing, can find no difficulty in exalting even such as we are thither ; and that goodness, which moved thee to make them, is sufficient to prevail for making even thus happy the creatures, which thou wouldest not have made, hadst thou not intended that they should be happy.

In this alone it is that I place my hope. For *I will not trust in my bow, it is not my sword that shall help me ; but thy right hand and thine arms, and the light of thy countenance*, (Psal. xlv. 3.) because thou hast favour to thy own handywork. Thou knowest our frame and temper, that we are all as a *leaf* that withereth, our *life a blast* and *vapour upon earth*, and *every man living altogether vanity*. And these reflections give us confidence, that we shall find compassion for our frailties. For will the God of matchless strength exert his power against dry stubble, driven about by every gust of wind ? Will the *king of Israel* hunt a *dog* or a *flea* ? (1 Sam. xxiv. 14.) We have heard largely of thy mercy, O Lord, that *thou didst not create death, neither hast pleasure in the destruction of the living, nor in the death of him that dieth by his own perverse choice*. (Wis. i. 13 ; Ezek. xviii. 32.) Suffer not, therefore, we beseech thee, that which thou never madest, to have dominion over the creatures which thou didst make. For if thou art grieved at our destruction, what can obstruct thy finding joy in our life and salvation ? If thou wilt, thou canst save me, but I am not able without thee to save myself, though I would never so fain : For the

number of my miseries is very great, and their weight lies heavy upon me.

To will indeed is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. (Rom. vii. 18.)

Nay, even to will that good is not in my disposal, and even what I have the power to do, I sometimes find not the inclination to do, except thou grant my petition, that *thy will may be done in earth as it is in heaven*. And what I would and could do, I know not how to set about, unless thy wisdom shew the way, and enlighten my eyes, that I may discern and walk in it. Nay, farther yet, although I know my duty, and have the will and ability sometimes to discharge it, yet all my knowledge is vain and imperfect, unless thy true wisdom, which descendeth from above, render my knowledge active and effectual. For to thy will every thing is possible, and nothing can resist the great Lord of all. Let then thy will be done in us, upon whom thy name is called, that this noble creature perish not, which thou hast formed for the illustration of thy own glory. For *what man is he that liveth, and shall not see death, or who can deliver his soul from the hand of hell*, (Ps. lxxxix. 48.) unless thou please to work out his deliverance, who art alone that source of life, by whose life-giving influence all things live?

I have already ascribed my strength to thee, and with the most profound humility, confessed, that I did formerly trust in my own strength, which upon trial proved no better than weakness. When in this mistaken persuasion I attempted to run, I fell where I thought myself most able to stand. I stumbled and went backwards, and the prize I aimed at fled farther from me, when I thought myself making most directly up to it. Thus hast thou, by many disappointments of my vain confidence, brought me to a true sight of my own impotent condition. And by these dispensations I

was instructed, when that appeared least of all in my power, which I imagined most easy to be compassed, without any succours from abroad. How often have I boasted, that I would attempt this, or perform that good action, and neither performed, nor so much as attempted either? How often was my will not seconded by power? How often hath my power lost all its efficacy for want of the will to employ? And whence all this, but want of looking up to him, from whence both the will and the power of doing good is derived, and thinking myself absolute master of both, when in truth I was so of neither.

But, being now brought to a better sense, I acknowledge before thee, my God and Father, that by his own proper *strength no man shall* prevail, (1 Sam. ii. 9.) and that it is but a folly and vain presumption, when any *flesh glories in thy presence*. (1 Cor. i. 19.) For it is not in man alone to will the good he can do, nor to perform the good he would do, no, nor to know the good he would or could do: but all their steps are guided by thee. Theirs, I say, who are duly persuaded, that it is not by themselves, but by thee that they are conducted in the ways of holiness and salvation. Wherefore we most earnestly implore thee by the bowels of thy tender mercies, that thou wilt save the creatures thou hast made. For if thou wilt, thou canst do it; and upon thy will to do it depends the strength of our hopes, and the certainty of our salvation.

Call then to remembrance those tender mercies which have been ever of old, and to finish that goodness in its utmost perfection with *the blessings whereof thou hast prevented me* from the beginning. (Ps. xxi. 3.) Well may I say, thou hast prevented me. For, long before this Son of thy handmaid was born, thou didst prepare the way, wherein I should go, and by it be led to the glories of thy

house. Before thou hadst formed me in the womb thou knewest me, and hast determined all thy good pleasure concerning me; (Ps. cxxxix. 19.) and ever since I was born I have been holden up by thee, my God and my hope, even from my mother's breasts. (Ps. xxii. 9.)

For such is thy comprehensive and unchangeable knowledge, that what I now expect thousands of years to come, in thy eternal purpose is fixed and done already: and, although with regard to the event it be still future, yet in thy foresight and decree it is already passed beyond the possibility of reversal or alteration. What this is, so far as I am concerned, stands indeed entered in thy book; but I, who know not what thou hast determined, am full of fear and jealousies. The vast variety of dangers that threaten me on every side; the troops of enemies combined against my life, the numberless miseries that obstruct and intercept my course; these fill my soul with such perplexity and dread, that wert not thou my assistance and support I should be lost and sunk into despair.

But my hope is great in thee, my most merciful King and my God, and *in the multitude of the sorrows which I have in my heart, thy comforts refresh my soul.* (Ps. xciv. 19.) The signal marks of thy goodness, even before I was born, in making such provisions for my happiness; the many more which have followed me since, and been particular to me, besides those common to other men; these all forbid me to distrust, nay, they engage me to be very confident, that the past demonstrations of thy love, are pledges and earnest of more and better blessings in reserve; that so much done on my behalf already, was never intended to be lost; but what thou hast begun thou wilt graciously finish, and grant me in thy own due time to *see the felicity of thy chosen, and re-*

joice in the gladness of thy people, and give thanks with thine inheritance. (Ps. civ. 5.)

Why should I not believe and hope all this? Or how indeed can I do otherwise, when these glorious instances of thy favour and love occur to my thoughts so often, but never too often, mentioned, O my love and only delight? Whom I love because thou first lovedst me; (1 John iv. 19.) and provedst it by those precious evidences of creating me like myself, preferring me in honour above thy other creatures, and instructing me how to keep up the dignity of my character, which is then only preserved, when I know and serve thee, for whose use and glory I was made.

The same large expectations are farther cherished by one reflection more, that of thy angels being made *ministering spirits* (Ps. civ. 4.) for me, and having a charge given them over me, to *keep me in all my ways, lest at any time I hurt my foot against a stone.* (Ps. xci. 11, 12.) These are the guards, the shining centinels upon the new *Jerusalem*, and thy mountains round about her; keeping watch over thy flock night and day, lest our *adversary the devil*, (Ps. cxxv. 2.) (that old serpent, who *like a roaring lion goes about continually seeking whom he may devour*) (1 Pet. v. 8.) should at any time surprise weak and unwary souls, and *tear them in pieces like a lion, while there is none to help.* (Ps. vii. 2.) These are the denizens of that blessed city above, which is *mother of us all, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation*, (Gal. iv. 26; Heb. i. 14.) that they may support and conduct them safely; and who constantly behold the face of their *Father in heaven*, who hath committed his *little ones* to their care. (Matt. xviii. 10.)

And great is their affection towards their fellow-citizens, as the persons in whom they hope to see the breaches of their own order one day re-

paired. Hence are they so wakeful and solicitous about us, so ready to relieve us at every time and place, supplying our wants, and going diligently upon dispatches between us and thee, our common Lord. (1 Cor. xi. 10.) Attending upon our devotions, presenting our requests before the throne of grace, and from thence conveying down to us the blessings we desire. These bright attendants always keep us company, go in and out with us ; observe how holily, how decently, we behave ourselves in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation ; with what earnest zeal *we seek thy kingdom, and the righteousness thereof* ; with what *fear and trembling* (Matt. vi. 33.) we serve the Majesty on high, and with what pious raptures our hearts are transported at thy goodness. They assist us in our labours, watch over us in our beds, encourage us in our conflicts, crown us in our conquests, rejoice with them that rejoice, provided they rejoice in thee, and mourn with them that mourn, when their sorrows and sufferings are for thy sake.

O how vigilant is their care ! O how fervent their affection ! and all this for the magnifying that inestimable love, wherewith thou hast vouchsafed to love us. For they love whom thou lovest, keep them whom thou keepest, and forsake them whom thou forsakest. They love not the wicked, *because thou hatest all the workers of iniquity, and abhorrest them that speak lies.* (Ps. v. 5, 6.) When we do well, the angels rejoice, and the devils are grieved : When we go astray, we bring joy to devils, and defraud the angels of that joy we owe them. For *there is joy in heaven, over one sinner that repenteth* ; (Luke xv. 7. 10.) and triumph in hell over one righteous man that relaps-eth into sin. Do thou, therefore, gracious Father, enlarge thy angels joy ; and furnish matter for it daily more and more, that thou mayest be glori-

fied in our obedience, and we may be brought with them into thy one fold, to give thanks for ever to thy holy name, O Almighty Maker of angels and men.

These benefits I gratefully commemorate, and admire the greatness of that love, which gave thy holy angels for ministering spirits to us. Thou hadst given all things under heaven for our use and service, and as if thou thoughtest all this too little, thou hast given us the inhabitants of heaven itself, for the same gracious purposes. Let thy angels, O Lord, praise thee; let all thy works render thanks unto thee, and let thy saints for ever bless thee, for this mighty favour. O God, our glory, how hast thou honoured, how hast thou enriched, how highly hast thou exalted and ennobled us with thy manifold and marvellous gifts! *how excellent, how wonderful is thy name, O Lord, in all the world; thou that hast set not only thine, but our glory above the heavens!* Lord *what is man, that thou art thus mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou shouldest thus set thy heart upon him?* Thus hast thou eminently verified thy own word, that *thy delight is with the children of men.* But is not man corruption, and the son of man a worm? *Is not every man living altogether vanity?* Yet dost thou, by a most astonishing condescension, *open thine eyes upon such a one as this, and bring him into judgment with thee.* (Ps. viii. 9; iv. 5; Job vii. 17; Prov. viii. 31; Job xv. 6; Ps. xxxix. 5; Job xiv. 3.)

CHAP. XIII.

The Methods of God's Grace in our Sanctification and Salvation.

TEACH me, thou unfathomable abyss, thou wisdom, by which the world was framed,

which *hast weighed the mountains in scales, and* hauged the vast globe of the earth in a balance ; (Isa. xl. 12.) weigh up, I beseech thee, this heavy mass of body by thy invisible power, and raise it nearer to thyself, that I may discern and know how wonderful thou art in all the world. O light ! antecedent to, and productive of all other light, whose brightness shined alone on the everlasting hills, and to whom all things lay naked and open, even before they were made ; (Heb. iv. 12.) whose purity abhors the least blemish : what pleasure canst thou take in man ? What *fellowship* can *light* so clear *have with darkness* so gross ? (2 Cor. vi. 14.) Or where is it, that thou hast prepared a sanctuary in me, fit for so glorious and holy a majesty to enter and dwell, and take delight therein ? the spirits, by whose sanctifying graces all things are cleansed, which cannot be seen by any, much less be possessed by any, but the *pure in heart*, will not certainly lodge in any but clean habitations.


And is it possible to find in man a place fit to receive thee ? *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ?* Who indeed, but he, whose very essence is purity ? for that which is unclean itself cannot cleanse any other thing. And this was especially signified to our forefathers the *Jews*, in the law given from a mountain burning with fire, and out of a cloud and thick darkness, by which it was ordained, that whosoever was touched by a person under legal uncleanness, should be reputed from that contract unclean. (Exod. xix. 20 ; Levit. xxii. 6.) And such, alas ! are we all : even the very best of us polluted, conceived, and born in corruption, and carrying the marks of our impurity so visible, so foul, that it is to no purpose to attempt the concealing our blemishes from thy all-seeing eyes : unless thou, therefore, who alone art pure, vouchsafe to sanctify us, we never can be clean. (Ps. li. 5.) And this mercy thou didst

vouchsafe to those among the sons of men, in whom thou condescendest to dwell ; (Eph. i.) these, by the unsearchable secrets of thy judgments, (always just, though to us unknown,) thou hast without any desert of theirs predestinated before the world, (Rom. viii. 30.) called and chosen them out of the world, justified in the world, and wilt exalt and glorify them when the world shall be no more. (John xvii. 6.) But this mercy thou dost not extend to all indifferently, but with most wise discrimination ; that the wisdom of this world may see it, and consume away with envy and astonishment.

When I reflect on these thy secret dispensations, amazement seizes me ; and the profound mysterious methods of thy wisdom and knowledge fill me with wonder at judgments too dark and vast for me to take a distinct view of. For to what else can we ascribe the distant fates of the same sort of creatures, and, that the almighty Potter should of *the same lump make some vessels to honour, and others to everlasting dishonour and shame?* (Rom. ix. 21.) Those, therefore, which thy love made choice of, to be an holy temple for thy majesty, thou cleanseest by thy Spirit, and sanctifiest with the *washing of water by thy word*, (2 Tim. ii. 22.) whose names and numbers are exactly known to thee ; who *countest the number of the stars, and callest them all by their names :* these happy men are *written in the book of life*, and so preserved by thy power, *through faith unto salvation, that all things, even their own faults and frailties work together for good to them. Though they fall, they shall not be utterly cast down, because thou upholdest them with thy hand. Thou keepest all their bones, so that not one of them is broken.* (Ps. cxlvii. 4 ; Phil. iv. 3 ; Luke x. 20 ; 1 Pet. i. 5 ; Rom. viii. 28 ; Ps. xxxvii. 24, and xxxiv. 20.)

But dismal and most dreadful is the end of sinners ; of such as thou, before ever the world was made, didst (in thine infinite wisdom, to which the most remote futurities are ever present) foresee, would deserve to be reprobated by thy just, though to us secret judgment ; whose names and crimes are likewise known to thee, who tellest the sands of the sea, and soundest the great deep. These for their manifold and obstinate offences, thou *givest up to their own hearts lusts, and lettest them follow their own imaginations.* (Ps. lxxxi. 11, 12.) And when they are thus permitted to perish in their folly, all things work together for their hurt, and the very *prayer of the wicked is turned into sin.* (Prov. xxviii. 9 ; Ps. cxix. 7.) In-
somuch, that what promising appearances soever they make, yet all at last is blasted, and comes to nothing ; and even such as seem to have set their nest in the stars, are brought down, and cast out as dung upon the face of the earth.

Great and marvellous are these thy counsels, O most worthy judge eternal, who sittest in the *throne of equity, and bringest to pass things deep and unsearchable.* (Ps. ix. 4 ; Job v. 9.) And well may these strike terror through every part of me, since man, during this mortal state cannot attain to perfect security, but is still left exposed to temptation and danger, that he may accomplish his warfare with the greater circumspection, *serve thee* in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life *with fear*, and *rejoice unto thee with reverence.* (Ps. ii. 11 ; Phil. ii. 12.) That his obedience may be preserved by awe ; and his joy tempered with humility and trembling ; that *he who girdeth on his armour should not boast himself, as he that putteth it off* ; nor any flesh glory in thy presence ; but rather fear and humble itself before thy Majesty, when all are kept in this profitable ignorance of what may befall them in



their latter end ; and cannot make a judgment of thy love or hatred, or sing songs of triumph to their souls, till all the hazards of the fight be over.

How many have our own eyes seen, how many more have we heard of, (which yet I never see, or hear, or recollect, without great impression) who have been long renowned for conspicuous patterns of heroic virtue, and such as seemed if any could do so absolutely, to *have made their calling and election sure*? and yet upon some trying emergency, even these men have been vanquished and ensnared, and so entirely lost, not only to the practice, but by degrees to the very principle of goodness, as to wallow and be hardened past all feeling in the most enormous and scandalous debaucheries! Such are *the stars of heaven struck down to the earth*, (Rev. xii. 4.) with a sweep of the dragon's tail. How many on the other hand (which sustains me with comfort) who have lain grovelling in dust and filth, profligate and ignorant, as well as averse to all goodness, yet even these abandoned wretches thou hast wonderfully raised, when they seemed to be just sinking into hell. Thus may we frequently observe the living die unexpectedly, and the dead in trespasses and sins, as much to our surprise, raised to a life of righteousness and hope : Light clouded over with darkness, and darkness breaking forth into marvellous light. Publicans and harlots seizing heaven by violence, and the children of the kingdom cast into utter darkness.

And whence all this, but because they ascended into that mountain of pride into which the first pattern of disobedience went up an angel, but came down a devil? whereas the meek and humble are the persons chosen and called, sanctified and built up a meet habitation for the majesty of the great God, through the Spirit of his grace. With these thou enjoyest holy and chaste de-

lights ; dwelling in their hearts by thy presence, and making them thy temple, which is the highest honour our human nature is capable of.

For this soul of ours, which thou hast created by thy word, though not of thy own substance ; nor yet of any elementary matter, but out of nothing : this rational, intellectual, and spiritual being, ever living, and ever in motion, (upon which thou hast impressed thy likeness, and consecrated it to thyself by the laver of regeneration) is put into a capacity of receiving thy Divine Majesty, and so contrived, as to be filled with thee, and nothing else but thee. When it is in possession of thee its desires are satisfied, and nothing besides remains an object of its wishes. But while it continues to desire any external object, it manifestly betrays the want of thee within ; because when thou art there it seeks for nothing beyond thee.

For since thou art the supreme and universal good, in thee possessing all things, it cannot want any thing that is good. But if it do not desire that which is the sum of all good, some other good will necessarily be sought after, because it hath not yet attained to all, nor yet to the chief good, and aims at the possession of the creature rather than the Creator. And so long as the creature is the object of its desires, those desires are never to be satisfied ; for some fresh thing is ever presenting itself, and the soul still remains empty and discontented, because out of its element, and destitute of its proper happiness. For nothing is so, but the utmost perfection it is qualified for, and such alone is that blessed Original, after whose image it was made at first. Now thou art pleased thus to communicate thyself only to such, who desire nothing but thee. Such thou makest holy as thou art holy, pure and worthy of thee, such esteemest thy friends, who *counting* all things but

as dross and dung, propose no other end, no other bliss but to gain thee alone.

And this is the blessedness, which thy mercy hath bestowed upon man : this is thy honour, with which thou hast distinguished thy favourite creature, and exalted him far above the rest of the works of thy hands. And now, O Lord, at length I have found out the place where the great, the good, the mighty God is pleased to dwell. Even in that soul which thou hast formed into a resemblance of thy own excellences ; which seeks, and loves, and longs for thee alone ; but not in that, which divides its affections, and either loves thee, and desires thee not, or loves and longs for other things *besides thee*.

CHAP. XIV.

We are not to conceive God to be a sensible Object.

I HAVE gone astray like a sheep that was lost, seeking thee with great anxiety without, when yet thou art within, and dwellest in my soul, if it desire thy presence. I wandered about the villages and streets of the city of this world, inquiring for thee every where ; and found thee not ; because I expected to meet that abroad, which all the while I had at home. I sent my messengers into all quarters, and charged my bodily senses to make strict search, and bring back a true report, but all to no purpose ; because I took a wrong method, and employed those who were not qualified for the discovery. This error I now perceive, because thou hast enlightened and shewed me the right way ; for though thou art within me, yet none of these centinels could give any account how thou camest thither.

My eyes declare if God have no colour, he came not in at those doors ; my ears, if he made

no noise, did not pass this way ; my nose, if he did not affect the smell, he entered not by me ; my palate, if he have no taste, he could not enter here ; my touch, if he be not a bodily substance, I can give no account of him. These qualities then do not belong to thee, my God, because I am not conscious of any such impressions upon thy approach. For thou hast not the form of a body, nor the whiteness of light, nor the sparkling of precious stones, nor the harmony of music, nor the fragrantcy of flowers, or ointments, or spices, nor the delicious taste of honey, nor the charms of those things that are pleasant to the touch, nor any other qualities by which our senses are entertained. When I seek after God, I pursue a happiness very different from all these ; for to suppose him such a being, as even brutes are capable of feeling with the organs of sense, were to think most unworthily, most absurdly of him.

And yet I cannot but acknowledge, that in God I expect to find a certain light above all other light, too bright for mortal eyes to behold ; a powerful voice above all other voices, too strong for any ear to hear ; a sweetness above all other sweets, too exquisite for any taste to relish. A light shining without being confined by any determinate space ; a voice sounding without losing itself in air, a fragrant perfume without the assistance of winds to waste it. Such is my God, and there is none that can be compared unto him. And such is the object, which my soul loves and longs after.

And too late it was, that I set my heart upon thee, O my Beloved, whose beauty was from everlasting, and yet is always new and blooming. Too long did I pursue thee in vain, while running after the beauteous creatures thou hast made, and thinking there to find thee. Thou wast with me,

but I was not with thee; and those things kept me at a distance from thee, which yet could not subsist except in and by thee. I asked the earth, if it was not my God, and it answered *No*; and all that it contains unanimously agreed in the same confession. I asked the sea, the great depths, and all the vast and strange variety of creatures, living and engendered in those watery regions; they replied, *We are not thy God, look for him above us*. I inquired of the firmament; and the air with all its inhabitants replied that *Anaximenes* was quite mistaken; so did the sun, and moon, and stars, declare they were not God. Then I desired the object of my senses, to inform me somewhat of that good, which they disclaimed all pretence of being taken for. They all cried out aloud, *It is he that made us*. At last I resorted to this globe of the world, but there again the answer was, *I am not God, but I am by him; the Being whom you seek in me is he that made me. And you look much too low; for he who made and governs me is much more excellent, and seated far above me*.

Now by inquiring of the several creatures, I mean by an attentive consideration of their respective natures and conditions: and by their answers, that evidence of their being created by God, which is the plain result of such a consideration. For most agreeable to the experience of every wise and sober person, is that of the apostle, that the *invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that were made*. (Rom. i. 10.)

After consulting thus the creatures abroad, I came home at last, descended into myself, and asked, *What art thou?* The reply made me was, *A rational and mortal man*. Then I begun to examine what, and from whence this sort of animal should be, and presently reflected, *Whence could*

it possibly be but from thee? It is thou, my God, that hast made me, and not I myself. (Ps. c. 3.) But still, who art thou? Thou art he, by whom I live; he by whom all things live: thou art the true God, the only omnipotent, and eternal, and incomprehensible and infinite. Everlasting, and nothing dies in thee; for thou art immortal and *inhabitest eternity*, (Isa. lvii. 15.) wonderful in the eyes of the angels, inexpressible, unsearchable, and of perfection so great as wants a name. Strong and powerful, and greatly to be feared, without beginning and without end, thyself the beginning and the end of all things. Existing before time was, governor and Lord of all that thou hast made; whose causes all are fixed in thee, and the effects subsist in such manner and to such a term, as thy immutable wisdom sees fit.

Tell then thy servant, who desires to know, whence could man take his original, but from thee? Could any of us give life and being to himself? Nay, was it possible for any other to give him either, but for thee alone? Art not thou the first and supreme Being, from whom all else receive their being? Whatever is, is certainly from thee; for nothing is without thee. Thou art the fountain of life: whatever lives, by thee it lives; for nothing can live without thee. Thou hast made all things, and can I then doubt who made me? Thou certainly art my Maker, and I thy workmanship. Thanks be to my God, by whom I and all things subsist and live, for my creation: thanks to this skilful artificer, whose hands made and fashioned me, for creating me a man. Thanks to that light, which discovered itself to me, and me to myself. For in finding and knowing myself, I find and know thee: and by the communication of thy light it is that I know thee. Thanks, therefore, O my God, all thanks and praise be to thee, for thus enlightening me.

But how can I pretend to say, I know thee? not thou God infinite, incomprehensible, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, *who only hast immortality, and dwellest in light which cannot be approached unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see?* (1 Tim. i. 17.) A God that hidest thyself from mortal eyes? And who can know what he hath never seen? The herald, sent to prepare the way for thy truth, proclaimed, *No man hath seen God at any time*; and that truth itself declared, *No man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son.* (John i. 18; Matt. xi. 27.) Thus the Lord is said to be high above all heavens, and such as even the angels (strictly speaking) do rather admire than behold: This is the heaven to which *none hath ascended up, but he that came down from heaven*: (John iii. 13.) Thus the Father is known to none, but the Son and the Spirit proceeding from both; and the Son to none but the Father and the same Spirit common to them both: The holy and wonderful Trinity does then exceed all comprehensions but its own; and the very angels, who are continually looking into this glorious essence, and contemplate it with a most intense desire, yet are not able to express, conceive, or acquaint themselves thoroughly with all its most mysterious perfections.

How is it then that I know the most high God, whom neither heaven nor earth contain, whom even cherubim and seraphim adore with astonishment, and veil their faces with their wings before him that sits on the throne; crying out, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory?* (Isa. vi. 3.) I know thee not, my God, as thou art in thyself, but as thou art with respect to me: not in thy essence, but thy operations; and even this knowledge is not from any powers of my own, but wholly owing to the guidance

of that light, which thou art pleased to reflect upon me. Thy glories are understood by thyself alone, thy grace and goodness manifested to me. And what art thou with respect to me? Tell me, O Lord, and *say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.* (Ps. xxxv. 3.) Hide not thy face from me, lest I die: Suffer me to speak to thy mercy, who am but dust and ashes. Thou hast made thy voice to be heard from above, and broken through the deafness of my heart; thy light hath shined forth; and thou hast shewed me that thou art my *Saviour and my merciful God*; and thus it is that I have said I know thee.

Thus have I known thee, *the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* (John xvii. 3.) How wretched was that blindness, in which I saw thee not! how stupid that deafness, when I heard thee not! how miserable my condition, when I loved thee not! For no man loves thee, who does not see thee, and none can see thee, who does not love thee.

Honour, and praise, and thanksgiving be to the light of my life, for those manifestations of himself, which he hath vouchsafed to make to my soul. But how is it that thou hast manifested thyself to me? even by instructing me, that thou art my only God and Creator, the true living God, almighty, immortal, invisible, eternal, incomprehensible, unsearchable, unchangeable, infinite, by whom all things were made, and the principles of all subsist. Whose majesty, as it had no beginning or increase, so shall it never have diminution or end. The one only God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons and one substance, author and common cause of all things visible and invisible, who by thy mighty power didst at the beginning of time form spiritual and corporeal substances; the angels of the former, the things of this world of the latter sort; and man partak-

ing of both natures, consisting of body and spirit, by a stupendous conjunction of material and immaterial, and all these created out of nothing. (Ps. lxxxvi. 10; Gen. i. 26; John xvii. 3; 1 Tim. i. 17; Job xi. 7; Ps. xc. 2; Matt. xi. 25; John i. 8; Colo. i. 16.)

I know and acknowledge thee, O Father, begotten of none; thee, O Son, begotten of the Father; thee, O Holy Ghost, the comforter, proceeding from both, three persons co-equal, consubstantial, co-eternal. This holy undivided trinity in unity, and unity in trinity, *I believe with the heart unto righteousness, and confess with the mouth unto salvation.* (John xiv. 26; Rom. x. 10.)

I confess and acknowledge thee the true God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, Creator, Saviour, and Redeemer of me, and of all mankind. *Begotten of the Father, before all worlds, God of God, Light of light, very God of very God, being of one substance with the Father, and Holy Spirit, by whom all things were made.* Firmly believing, that thou, God, only begotten Jesus Christ, by a marvellous concurrence of the whole Trinity, *wast for us men and for our salvation, incarnate of the ever blessed virgin Mary, conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and so perfect God was made perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.* (John i. 4, 5; Heb. i. 3; Matt. i. 21.)

Who, though in regard of thy Divine nature, thou art impassible and immortal, yet, for the unspeakable love, wherewith thou hast loved us, didst, by taking our human into that Divine nature, become subject to sufferings and death. And thus the same Son of God condescended to die upon the cross for a time, that he might deliver us from everlasting death. Thou, giver of light, descendest into hell, where our forefathers sat in darkness; and the third day didst rise


again from thence a glorious and triumphant conqueror; taking up that blessed body of thine, which for our sins had lain dead in the grave, and restoring it to life the third day, according to the Scriptures, that thou mightest enthrone it at the right hand of the Father. Then didst thou lead that captivity captive, which the enemy of mankind had taken prisoner; and thus, thou very Son of God, with our very substance, that is, the human soul and body, derived from thy blessed virgin mother, hast ascended up on high, far above all heavens; angels, principalities and powers being made subject to thee; where now thou sittest at the right hand of God, in endless overflowing life, in light inaccessible, in that peace which passeth all understanding. (Eph. ii. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 21. 24; Matt. xxviii. Eph. iv. 8.)

There we believe and worship Jesus Christ, very God and very man; confessing, that God, *who hath so exalted thee*, is thy Father of a truth, and waiting for thy coming in *the end of the world to judge the quick and dead*, and *render to every man according to his works*; (Acts x. 42; Matt. xxvi. 27.) to the good reward and rest, to the evil, grief and punishment eternal. For at that day shall all *men hear thy voice*, and shall come forth with their own bodies, that each may *receive* at thy hand *according to that he hath done in his body, whether it be good or bad*. (Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; John v. 28, 29; xi. 25.) Thou art our life, thou art our resurrection, and in thee we look for a Saviour, *Jesus Christ the Lord, who shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body, according to his mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself*. (2 Cor. v; Phil. iii. 21.)

I know and acknowledge thee, the one true God, Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son; of the same substance and eternity

with the Father and the Son, our advocate and comforter; (1 John v. 7; John xiv. 16.) who didst descend like a dove upon the same our Lord Jesus Christ, and appear in fiery tongues upon the blessed apostles. (Matt. iii. 16; Acts ii. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 9, 10, 11.) Who hast from the beginning of the world shed abroad the gifts of thy grace upon all the saints and chosen of God, and opened the mouths of the prophets, that they might reveal the wonders of his kingdom; who with the Father and the Son together art worshipped and glorified in all churches of the saints. Among whom I also, thy meanest servant, beg leave to publish thy praises, for the saving light communicated to my poor soul. For thou art the true light, the holy fire of God, to whom all saints are subject; the Spirit of truth, who by thy *unction teacheth us all truth*; (1 John ii. 20. 27; Rom. viii. 8, 9.) without whose grace it is impossible to please God; for thou art God of God, and light, proceeding after a mysterious and ineffable manner from the Father of lights, and from his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. With these thou art co-equal, and co-eternally united in the same essence, and with them reignest, and art glorified by a singular and a most stupendous union.

Thus do I know the one true God, three in persons, and one in essence; thus do I confess and adore with my whole heart the maker and governor of all things that are in heaven and earth, and under the earth. I know these by that faith which thou hast inspired into me: for thou art the light of my eyes, the hope of all the ends of the earth, the joy of my youth, and the support of my old age. *All my bones shall be joyful in thee, and say, Lord who is like unto thee?* (Ps. xxxv. 10.) Yea, who among the gods is *like unto thee, O Lord*, who art not made as they were, by mens hands, but who thyself didst make



the hands of men? The images of the heathen are silver and gold, and all their gods are devils. But it is the Lord that made the heavens. The Lord he is the God. The Lord he is the God. (Ps. cxv. 4; 1 Kings xviii. 39; Ps. xcvii. 7.) Confounded be all the vain gods, and let them find no place in heaven and earth, who made neither heaven nor earth; but let heaven and earth, and all that therein is, for ever glorify and praise thy name; for thou hast made heaven and earth, and all that therein is. (Exod. xx. 11.)

CHAP. XV.

A Confession of our Vileness and God's Excellences.

WHO is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods, who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Exod. xv. 11.) Too late, alas! it is, that I am brought to a due sense and knowledge of thee. A thick and gloomy cloud hung too long before my blinded eyes, through which I was not able to discern the Sun of Righteousness and Light of truth. I was muffled up in darkness, a child of darkness, and did not only endure, but love my darkness; because as yet in ignorance of the truth. I was blind, and fond of defect and misery, and every day bewildered more and more, in darkness that might even be felt. And what kind friend was he that took me by the hand to draw me out of this shadow of death? Who so compassionate a guide to this blind wretch, to seek me when I sought not him, to call me when I never cried for help, never complained, nay, never felt my calamitous and lost condition? This can be none but thine, my God, *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.* (2 Cor. i. 3.) No bowels less enlarged

than thine could shew such tender pity and affection. Blessed, therefore, be thy name ; for ever blessed be thy name ; for ever blessed be thy love, *which was found of a miserable creature, who sought thee not, and asked thee not, and asked for him that inquired not after thee.* (Is. lxx. 1.)

In this spiritual, as heretofore in the natural creation, thy powerful voice said, *Let there be light, and there was light.* (Gen. i. 3.) The gross night which swam before my eyes dissolved in an instant. I felt it scatter, and descried the dawning day, and heard the powerful command, and full of thankful wonder cried out, *Thou verily art my God, which hast brought me out of darkness and the shadow of death into thy marvellous light.* Thou spakest the word, and behold I see. Then did I first discover the horror of my former darkness, the dismal abyss in which I lay ; and trembled at the reflection. O wretched state ! O most uncomfortable blindness, which all the light of heaven did not penetrate ! O deplorable ignorance ! which knew not him who made me, preserves me, is always present with me, always inseparably in me. Thanks to my God, for bringing me to a sight of that, which I must needs have seen before, had not my corruption been so opposite to thy purity ; but then, alas ! we are in direct contrariety ; thou light, I darkness ; and discern thee I could not, till thou dartest thyself into my soul ; for there is no light besides, none without thee.

Such is my meanness and misery, considered in itself, but I am yet much more vile and despicable in my own sight, when from such reflections I raise my soul to contemplate thy unchangeable majesty, O Lord God most holy, God of gods, and Lord of lords, at whose presence the hosts of angels tremble, dominions and thrones fall down and adore, of whose power and wisdom there is

no end, no measure; who hast laid the foundations of the world upon nothing, and gathered the waters of the sea together as an heap; the most mighty God of the spirits of all flesh; at whose word and presence the heavens and the earth quake, and to whose beck every element pays a ready obedience. Even so, blessed God, be thou for ever worshipped, obeyed, and glorified by thy whole creation. *Amen.*

In company with these, I thy unworthy servant do bow the neck of my heart by faith, and prostrate myself before the footstool of thy majesty, with humble gratitude for all thy mercies, but more especially for that spiritual light and guidance, which thou hast been pleased to vouchsafe unto me. By thee, O true light, *who lightest every man that cometh into the world*, I see and am thankful. I feel thy bright beams descending from above into my soul, cherishing and warming my inward parts, and making glad all my bones: finish, I beseech thee, the good work already begun in me. Increase thy blessed gift, and let the brightness of thy illuminating grace diffuse itself plentifully through every power and faculty of my mind.

What glowing in my breast is this I feel? What light, that darts its rays into my soul? O fire that never art quenched, kindle my affections! O Sun of Righteousness, that never settest, never art clouded, shine in my heart! how sweet is thy warmth! how secret and pleasant thy cheerful light! O let me ever be inflamed with thy Divine, thy delightful beams. Wretched are they that burn with impure fires; wretched, that walk by any other light, and remain destitute of thine: wretched those blind eyes, which do not, wretched those dim eyes which cannot, wretched those wilful eyes which wink hard and will not see the truth. Wretched they, who do not turn away

their eyes from beholding vanity ; for being long habituated to darkness disables such from bearing the brightness of thy light, or valuing as they ought, the blessing of thy cheering influences. They feel, and approve, and dote upon darkness; and, sinking every day into grosser degrees of ignorance, know not upon what slippery ground they stand, nor the dangerous precipices into which they are falling. O miserable wretches, who are not sensible of the worth of what they lose ! And yet more miserable those hardened souls, who are sensible of their loss and ruin, but nevertheless stumble and fall with eyes broad open, and go down quick into hell.

O heavenly lustre ! which discoverest thyself only to unblemished eyes and clean hearts ! *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* (Matt. v. 8.) Cleanse me thoroughly, thou sanctifying Spirit ; take out the beams and motes from my eyes, that I may be qualified steadily to behold thy Divine beauties. Command the scales of my old errors to fall off, which like thick mists dance before my deluded sight, and pierce them through with thy resplendent beams, that *in thy light I may see light.* (Ps. xxxvi. 9.) Praised be my God, the fountain of light ; for, whereas I was formerly blind now I see : strengthen then, I beseech thee, and diffuse this grace yet more plentifully in my soul. *Open thou my eyes, that I may discern the wondrous things of thy law.* (Ps. cxix. 18.) Thanks for the prospect I already have of thy stupendous perfections, which though as yet but distant and indistinct, *dark and through a glass*, is yet such as makes me vehemently desire a nearer view, and one that may be face to face. O ! when shall that day of joy and triumph come, which shall introduce me into the secret place of thy dwelling, the constant bright abode of thy majestic presence, that I may satisfy my largest

wishes, and find a fresh and never-ceasing pleasure in still desiring what I enjoy, and enjoying what I desire.

CHAP. XVI.

The Soul's earnest Longings after future Happiness.

LIKE as the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God. (Ps. xlii. 1.) O fountain of living water, when shall I approach thee, when have travelled through this dry, and desolate wilderness, in which there is no way; that my soul may be satisfied with the plenteousness of thy mercy? Behold, O Lord, I thirst, thou art the well of life; O quench my thirst. Yea, after the *living God do I thirst*, O suffer me to drink of thy pleasures; and hasten that day of praise and thanksgiving; that *day which thou, O Lord, hast made, that thy servants may rejoice and be glad in it.* (Ps. cxviii. 24.) O glorious day! O everlasting morning! whose sun never declines, in which I shall hear that most transporting sentence, *enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Into that joy, where are *things great and unsearchable, yea, marvellous things without number.* (Job v. 9.) A joy without conclusion, without interruption, without alloy; where we shall meet with all we can wish, and rest secure from all we can fear; free from the enemy's assaults, from the tempter's seducing insinuations; full of security, and rest, and peace, blessed with the ravishing vision of the Deity for ever: such is the joy of the Lord thy God.

O joy most exquisite, most excellent, most comprehensive; above which, in comparison of which, beside which, there is no joy. When shall

I enter into thee, and behold my God that dwelleth in thee? What is it that detains me from him whom my soul loveth? How long shall it be said unto my eager heart, wait, wait patiently: And now, O Lord, what do I wish and wait for? Surely it is for thee, *my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto thy glorious body.* (Phil. iii. 21.) Surely it is for my Lord's coming to the marriage, that he may admit me into the bride chamber. (Matt. xxv.) Come quickly, Lord, and do not tarry. Come Lord Jesus in, and visit us in peace and favour; come and unlock our prison doors, that thy released may rejoice before thee with a perfect heart. Come, thou *desire of all nations, shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole.* (Ps. lxxxvii. 7.) Come, my Light, my Redeemer, and set my soul at liberty, that I may give thanks unto thy holy name. How long must I continue to be tossed upon the waves of this mortal life, crying unto thee, O Lord, and thou hearest not? Bow down thine ear, I beseech thee, and listen when I call out of the deep, and bring me to the haven of everlasting bliss.

O happy souls, who are delivered from the perils of this sea, and got safe to shore; who have reached their native country, and exchanged their prison for a palace! Happy those combatants, who have received that crown of glory, which they endured the fight of various afflictions to obtain, and are now translated from short tribulations to endless triumphs! Happy beyond all expression, who have put off their load of frailty and suffering, who art in quiet possession of the glory which fadeth not away, and clothed with majesty and honour! O blessed state, O kingdom everlasting, where the souls of the saints are in peace and felicity, where *eternal rejoicing is upon every head, and sorrow and sighing flee away.* (Isa.

xxxv. 10.) Where the saints reign with thee their beloved Lord, and *deck themselves with light as with a garment*. (Ps. civ. 2.) O kingdom ever blessed, in which thou, Lord, the hope and crown of all thy faithful servants, makest them *glad with the joy of thy countenance*, (Ps. xxi. 7.) and *that peace which passeth all understanding*. (Phil. iv. 7.) Their joy knows no bounds, their mirth no sorrow, their health no pain, their light no intervals of darkness, their life hath no death, their happiness is universal, without the least mixture of evil: their youth is ever fresh and gay, their beauty always blooming, their love ever fervent, their pleasures have no abatement. For thou, O God, art their all in all, their sole, their chief, their perfect good.

But the more we admire the happiness of them who are exalted to this secure and blissful state already, the greater cause have we to bewail our own misery, who are still exposed to all the storms and shipwreck of a tempestuous and troubled sea: For we, alas! can only hope the best, but are not sure that we shall ever make the port of everlasting life and salvation. For our life is a state of exile and captivity, our end unknown, our fate wrapped up in clouds of a dark futurity. We lie at the mercy of winds and waves, and cast many a weary and longing look to the land of our hope and rest. But, O thou stay of our souls, our refuge and strength, whose light, like the sailor's star, shines through the thick clouds that hang over our heads, steer, we beseech thee, this floating vessel with the helm of thy cross, lest the deep swallow us up. Draw us out of these surges to thyself, our only comfort, whom now our weeping eyes can but just discern, standing afar off, like the dawn of the morning star, to conduct and receive us to the wished-for regions of light: we are thy redeemed, and as such cry

unto thee ; captives indeed at present, but such as thou hast ransomed with thy most precious blood. *Hear us, O God of our salvation, thou that art the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them that remain in the broad sea.* (Ps. lxxv. 5.) Thou standest upon the shore, and seest our dangers, and how our vessel works in the storm ; O save us for thy name's sake, and so direct our course, that we may happily decline those rocks on every side, which if we strike upon we are dashed to pieces. Thou knowest the value of our cargo, and the difficulties of the voyage. Save, Master, or we perish.

This is our distressed condition at present, but when thou hast brought us home to thyself, the fountain of wisdom and Father of lights, such complaints and all occasion for them shall cease. Then in thy light shall we see light ; not such as our corporeal eyes are now blessed with, but light unbodied, incorruptible, unquenchable, uncreated, the inaccessible, the true, the Divine light ; that which enlightens angels, and is the privilege and joy of saints, even the Source of light and life, even thee, my Lord and my God. For thou art the light, in whose *light we shall see light*, (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) that is, behold thee, and in thyself, and face to face. Which what else can it import, but, as thy blessed apostle hath very justly explained it, *knowing as we are known* ; being let into a distinct view and knowledge of thy truth and glory ? So that to *see thy face* is in effect to know the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, the clemency and goodness of the Holy Ghost, and the mysterious adorable union of all three in one undivided essence. And thus to see the living God, is the most exalted happiness, the honour and reward of blessed spirits, the crown of glory and eternal bliss, the beauty of peace, the paradise of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and

that fulness of joy which no finite mind can comprehend. For this is the utmost blessedness of glorified man, to see him who made heaven and earth, the infinitely good Being, which created, and saved, and brought him to bliss and glory with himself. This sight consists in a clear knowledge of him, in loving and admiring, in praising and possessing him. For he is the inheritance of his people, even of the spirits whom he hath purchased of old. He is their portion, and the recompense of their hopes and holy labours. *I am thy exceeding great reward*, (Gen. xv. 1.) was his declaration and promise to Abraham, and a promise it was every way worthy the Divine Maker: for great and noble things suit the character of great and noble persons. Thou indeed, my God, art exalted far above all gods, and thy reward is proportionably high: for thou art not great and thy reward little; but as thou art, so is that great: for thou art not one thing and thy reward another, but both the same, and both exceeding great. Thou art the bestower of the crown, and the crown itself; the maker of the promise, and the matter of the promise; the giver and the gift; the diadem of hope bedecked with glory; the desire and the joy of thy holy ones. The sight of thee is therefore all that bliss and recompense we can possibly hope for. *This is eternal life*, this thy own wisdom, *to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*. (John xvii. 3.) When therefore we shall see thee, the only, the true, the living, the almighty, infinite and incomprehensible Father; and thy only begotten, consubstantial and co-eternal Son, whom thou sentest into the world for our salvation, by the power of the Holy Ghost; when we shall see those three persons in the unity of that Spirit, one only Divine essence, besides whom there is no God; then shall we actually possess what we

now solicitously labour after : even that everlasting life and glory, which thou hast prepared for them that love thee, laid up for them that fear thee, and the portion of them that seek thy face continually.

And thou, O Lord my God, who hast formed me and preserved me from my mother's womb, suffer me not, I beseech thee, to be diverted from this one, and distracted in the pursuit of many objects ; but call in my wandering thoughts scattered upon things without, and let me stand collected in myself, and from myself, rise up and fix on thee alone ; that my heart may always be in a condition of saying with thy devout psalmist, *Thou hast said seek ye my face—thy face, Lord, will I seek*: even the face of the Lord of hosts, in the vision whereof the everlasting life and glory of blessed spirits in heaven consists. Let my heart therefore rejoice, that it may fear thy name. *Yea, let the heart of them rejoice, that seek the Lord.* (Ps. cv. 3.) But if the heart of them who seek him only be affected with so sensible a joy, how ravishing and intense must theirs needs be, who do not only seek but find him ? I will therefore seek thy face constantly, zealously, incessantly, that so at length *the gate of righteousness may be opened*, and I may go into the joy of my Lord. *This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter into it.* (Ps. cxviii. 19, 20.)

CHAP. XVII.

A concluding Prayer to the Holy Trinity.

O HOLY, blessed, and glorious Three, co-eternal and co-equal persons and one true God ; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; thou that alone inhabitest eternity, and that light to which no mortal can approach ; that hast founded the earth

by thy power, and rulest all the kingdoms of it by thy wisdom; holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth! Strong and terrible, merciful and just, worthy to be praised, admired, and loved above all things, by every creature capable of paying thee this tribute; power, wisdom, and goodness, one undivided Trinity, look down with pity, and give ear to the calling of thy poor servant, who humbly begs admission into the gates of righteousness, that he may render due thanks to thy glorious name.

Behold, great Master of the house, a needy beggar knocking at the door of thy mercy; O let him by his own experience prove the truth of that gracious promise, *Knock and it shall be opened unto you.* (Mat. vii. 7.) For what is knocking, if the inward groan, the sounding of my bowels, the vehement desires, the doleful lamentations, and moving tears, and importunate cries, with which my heart now seeks thee, do not deserve that name? Nor can any of these most inward griefs be lost upon an all-seeing God; for thou observest my most secret thoughts, and my heaviness is not hid from thee. *Turn not then thy face any longer from me, nor cast away thy servant in displeasure.* (Ps. xxvii. 9.) Hear, O Father of mercies, hear the loud complaints of thy desolate child, and stretch out thy right hand to help me. Draw me out of the mire of misery and corruption, and save me from the deep waters, the overflowings of ungodliness, that I sink not; my danger and my calamity thou canst not but see, and shall I be suffered to perish, while mercy itself looks on? Call up thy bowels, thy tender and unspeakable affection, of which I have already had so many instances: let these commiserate my present distress, and work out for me a mighty deliverance: that I may be conducted safe to thee, my God, and see the riches of thy

kingdom, and the beauties of thy glorious presence; and sing praises incessantly to thy name, *O Lord, who doth wondrous things.* (Ps. lxxii. 18.) Thou refreshest my soul with glad remembrances of thy goodness; and hast enlightened my younger years with the brightness of thy truth; forsake me not, I beseech thee, in my old age and grey hairs, but make my feeble body to rejoice, and renew my youth as the eagle's, (Ps. lxxi. ciii. 5.) and in thy due time command these dry bones to live again by a blessed resurrection to immortal life and glory.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S

MANUAL.

BOOK IV.

The Preface.

THE multitude and vast variety of enslaving objects with which in this life we are every where beset, divert our thoughts and cool our love of heaven. It is therefore necessary to fortify and rouse ourselves, that we may wake out of our deluding dream ; and when we feel our souls rove and fall off, we may be able to bring them back speedily, to God our true and chief good. This consideration, and my fervent love of my God, not any rash presumptuous conceit of my own abilities, put me upon compiling this little book ; that so I might have some pious reflections always about me ; collected from the choicest sayings of holy fathers ; the fervent reading whereof may warm me afresh with Divine love, whenever I shall feel that holy fire begin to languish in my heart. Assist me, therefore, O my God, in this well-intended undertaking ; for thee, even thee, I seek, and love, and praise, and adore, with heart, and mouth, and every faculty I have.

My mind entirely dedicates itself to thee, gasps and pants after thee, and covets no other bliss than the sight of her Beloved ; tastes no other pleasure, but that which results from speaking, hearing, writing, conferring, and perpetually dwelling upon the meditation of thee and thy glory : expecting from these sweet remembrances, some refreshment and inward calm, in the midst of a tempestuous world. To thee, therefore, O joy and desire of my heart, I cry aloud, and from the bottom of my heart. I call within, because I know thee there ; for wert not thou in me, I should not be at all ; and were not I in thee, thou wouldst not be in me. But thou art in me, whenever in my memory ; from thence I know thee, and there I find thee, when I call to mind, and delight myself in recounting, thy glorious perfections, from, and by, and in whom all things subsist.

CHAP. I.

The Excellences of the Divine Essence.

HEAVEN and earth, O Lord, are full of the majesty of thy glory : (Isa. vi. 3.) thou sustainest all things, and yet feelest no burden, fillest all, and art circumscribed by none. (Heb. i. 3.) Always in action, and yet always in rest, seeking and gatherest, but wantest not ; lovest without passion, art jealous without pain ; (Exod. xx. 5.) repentest without remorse, art angry without commotion : alterest thy measures, but not thy mind ; recoverest what thou hadst never lost, rejoicing in gain, and yet never poor, expecting thy own with usury, and yet never covetous ; bountiful, and paying to them, to whom thou art not indebted, and placing those good actions to account, which art thy due, that by a marvellous

condescension, thou mayest become thy faithful servants debtor. (Matt. xxv. 21.)

For who hath any thing which is not thine? (1 Cor. iv. 7.) Thou payest and owest not, thou remittest thy dues and lovest nothing. Thou art in every place, and in each entire; thou art to be perceived, but not with eyes of flesh. (Prov. xv. 3.) Absent from none, yet far from the imaginations of the ungodly; but still not absent even from them; for where thou art not by thy grace, thou art present by thy observation and vengeance. We follow thee, and yet thou removest not, and what we pursue we are not able to attain: for thou possessest, fillest, comprehendest, and sustainest all things by thy wonderful presence and power.

Thou teachest the hearts of the faithful, without the help of articulate sounds; (Isa. liv. 13.) art not extended with space, nor changed by time, nor nearer or more distant by motion; but inhabitest the light, to which no mortal can approach, which none hath seen or can see. (1 Tim. vi. 16.) Always at rest in thyself, and yet travelling through the universe, and each part of it. For thou art so entirely one, as not to be divided; but art every where all in *all*.

CHAP. II.

The inexpressible Perfection of the Divine Knowledge.

THOUGH the whole world were filled with volumes on that subject, yet could they not all declare the excellence of thy immense knowledge; for this is above the power of pens or tongues to express, or finite minds to comprehend. Thou art the source of Divine light transcendently great and good, and therefore exceed-

ing all quantity and quality. With thee to will is to do, and to intend is to be able to perform. By the almighty efficacy of this will alone, it was that thou madest all things out of nothing ; and every thing thus made, thou possessest without need, governest without trouble, disposest without resistance or interruption : for neither in heaven above, nor in earth nor hell beneath, is there any thing that can disturb the peaceful order of thy administration.

And yet thou are not the author of any evil ; for the doing this is what thy omnipotence extends not to, which can do all things good and great ; and therefore thou, who canst do every thing, canst yet do nothing to be repented of. Thy goodness gave us being, thy justice punishes our misdeeds, thy mercy spares us from the punishments we deserve. When we say that all things are full of thy power and presence, our meaning is not that they contain thee, but are contained in thee ; not that thou fillest them by parts and measure, so that each creature should receive such proportions of thee, as it is capable of, some more, some less ; but thou art entire in each of them, and every one of them entirely in thee. For all things are within the compass and governance of thy power ; and whoever hath not the comfortable presence of this goodness and favour, hath the terror of thy angry justice ever present with him.

CHAP. III.

The Thirst of the Soul after God.

BUT as for me, my dearest Lord, let the former of these, I beseech thee, be my portion. Come in much mercy down into my soul, and take possession and dwell there. A homely man-

sion, I confess, for so glorious a Majesty, but such as thou art fitting up for the reception of thee, by holy and fervent desires of thy own inspiring. Enter then, and adorn, and make it such as thou wilt not disdain to inhabit, since it is doubly the work of thy hands; first by a natural, to life, and since by a spiritual and better creation, to righteousness and true holiness: let me wear thee upon my heart as a signet, and let nothing ever deface the impression. Forsake not, I beseech thee, thy servant that calleth upon thee; for before I called thou preventest my desires; and that I call or seek thee, is from that grace which first of all sought and called me: and why was this, but that so sought I might seek thee again, and so seek as to find thee, and so find as unfeignedly to love and delight in thee? Love, I have sought; lo I have found my God, lo I desire to love thee; O increase my desire, O grant that request, and give me thy own self, without which though thou shouldst give me all that ever thou hast made, yet could not my desires be satisfied. Give then thy own self to thy own servant, for thy servant loveth thee; and if he love thee yet too little, endeavour to supply that defect, by wishing above all things to love thee every day more and more. Thou hast my whole heart, I know no rival passion, I burn with no other desire, I delight in the remembrance of no other object.

The power of this affection is so sensible, that while my mind is soaring up to thee, it finds itself in some degree released from this clog of flesh that hangs about it. A peaceable calm composes all my thoughts, the load of mortality and misery grows lighter, and all the tumult of worldly cares and troubles are hushed in silence and profound tranquillity. I feel my heart glow, my mind ravished with ecstasies of pleasure, my memory grows vigorous and strong, my intellectual pow-

ers more clear and bright, and my whole soul inflamed with eager love and earnest longings for invisible joys. O that I had wings like an eagle, that my towering flight might never falter, never rest till I had mounted up to the glories of thy heavenly habitation, and were filled with the pleasures of thy beauteous presence, and taste the sweets, and feast upon the rich dainties which the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem perpetually feed upon. Thou art our hope, our salvation and redemption, and exceeding great reward. Be thou also our glory and our joy. Let my soul ever seek thee, and let me persist in seeking, till I have found, and am in full possession of thee.

CHAP. IV.

The Misery of them who do not seek and love God.

FOR wretched is that soul, whose endeavours and desires are fixed on any other object, by a thirst always tormenting, but never refreshed, never satisfied. The end of living is lost to them who love not God; and he who desires life for the sake of any thing besides, is nothing, and aims at vanity and nothing. He who will not live to thee, he that is wise for any other purpose, is no better than a fool. To thee, therefore, gracious Lord, I commit, bequeath, devote myself, from whom alone my whole being and life, and knowledge, is derived: in thee is all my trust and confidence, from whom I expect my second and better life. I desire, and love, and worship thee, with whom I hope to dwell and reign, and be happy to all eternity. The soul which seeks and loves not thee, dotes on the world, and is a slave to sin; always in bondage, never at ease, never secure. Let my soul, gracious Lord, be ever employed in thy service, my present sojourning

tend ever to thee, and my heart be ever inflamed with the desire and love of thee alone.

Let this be my rest, and the contemplation of it my joy and comfort in the days of my pilgrimage. Let me be sheltered under the shadow of thy wings from the storms of anxious and worldly cares ; and when the winds blow and the waves swell, let this be my harbour and soft repose. O God, rich in goodness, and the bountiful giver of heavenly delights, sustain my faintings, relieve my hunger, break the bonds of my captivity, heal my wounds, and repair my breaches. Behold I stand at the door and knock, let that tender mercy, which from on high hath visited us, command the door to be opened, that I may go in to thee, and rest in thee, and be refreshed abundantly with thy heavenly sustenance. For thou art the bread and the fountain of life ; thou art the brightness of everlasting light ; thou art every thing by which those pious spirits are supported and comforted, who love and live to thee.

CHAP. V.

Prayer for Grace to love God above all Things.

O GOD, the light of every heart that sees thee, the life of every soul that loves thee, the strength of every mind that seeks thee, grant me ever to continue steadfast in thy holy love. Pour thyself into my heart, and let it overflow, and be so entirely filled with thy pleasures, that there may be no room left for the trifling vanities here below. I am ashamed and tired of living after the way of the world ; the very sight and hearing of transitory objects is troublesome : help me, my God, against the insinuations of such, and be thou the joy of my heart : take it all to thyself, and keep thy continual residence there. The house

I confess is strait; do thou enlarge it. Ruinous, but do thou repair it; full of pollutions, which might be a nuisance to eyes so pure; I know, and with grief confess it: but whose help shall I implore in cleansing it, except thine alone? To thee, therefore, I cry instantly, begging that thou wilt *purge me from my secret faults*, and especially *keep thy servant from presumptuous sins, that they never get the dominion over me.*

Enable me, sweet Jesus, I beseech thee, to lay aside the weight of fleshly lusts, and exchange my worldly desires and affections for those of thee and heaven. Let my body be in constant subjection to my soul, my senses to reason, and my reason to thy grace; that so both the outward and inward man may be ever obedient, and disposed to do thy will. Fill my heart, my mouth, and all my bones with thy praise. Enlighten my understanding, and exalt my affections, that I may soar upwards to thee; and set me free from those fetters which fasten me down, and are an incumbrance to me, that I may leave all here below, and serve, and fix, and dwell upon thee alone.

CHAP. VI.

The Happiness of Souls delivered from their earthly Prisons.

AND happy sure beyond imagination is that blest soul, which, making its escape out of this earthly prison, wings its way to heaven without any restraint; which sees its dearest Lord face to face; and, no longer enslaved to the fear of death, triumphs in the enjoyments of everlasting glory. Possessing thee, the object of its love and long pursuit, and singing hymns of never-ceasing praise to the honour of her King and Redeemer; satiated with the plenteousness of thy house, and

drunk with the rivers of thy overflowing pleasures. O happy company of heavenly citizens ! O glorious pomp of souls returning from their toilsome pilgrimage to the excellence of the beauty, and splendour and majesty of thy courts ! O the ravishing entertainment of those harmonious hymns, the melody of angels, and sweet notes of songs in consort, of which every member of the heavenly choir bears his part ! No mixture of bitter pollutes those holy joys, no malice or wickedness, no want or disgrace, no railing or reviling, or angry disputes, no fear or disquiet, no doubt or uneasiness, or mutual distrust ; nor force or discord ; but perfect peace and love, eternal praise and thanksgiving, uninterrupted rest, and joy everlasting in the Holy Ghost. My God, how happy should I be to hear that transporting music, and those Divine compositions, which publish the mysteries and glories of the blessed Trinity ; my God, how much happier and more honoured, if admitted not only to hear, but myself to join in concert with those sons of God, who sing to their Christ and King one of the pleasant songs of *Sion*.

O life, truly worthy that name ; because everlasting, ever blessed. A life of joy unpolluted with sufferings or sorrow, rest without labour or disturbance ; honour without fear or envy ; riches without robbery or loss ; health without decay, plenty without lack, happiness without disasters. Where all good things are enjoyed in perfect charity. Where God is seen face to face, and the mind is feasted and fully satisfied with knowledge, ever seeing and ever desiring to see more, but desiring without uneasiness, and satisfied so as never to be cloyed. Where the Sun of Righteousness sheds the refreshing beams of his excellent beauty upon every head ; and the original Light is so diffused, that every inhabitant of those blissful regions shines by the reflection :

for being constantly united to the Deity, they are transformed into the likeness of the Divine immortality and perfections ; thus receiving the full effect of their holy Lord's promise, *Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me ; and all be one in us, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* (John xvii. 21. 24.)

O glorious kingdom, to the inheritance whereof we are advanced, without the melancholy forms of death and succession, and whose possession knows no change or end ; but one perpetual day, subject to no revolution of time ; and never-fading laurels upon the head of each triumphant soldier, who hath fought manfully, and weathered all the toil and hardships of this spiritual warfare ! How do I long for that most blessed time, when this poor unworthy creature, the last and least of all my Master's servants, shall be called upon to put off this load of sin and corruption, and thus disburdened, remove, and fix my habitation in the heavenly city, mingling with that harmonious host above, and doing homage with them in the blessed presence of my glorious Lord : released not only from the sense, but even the sorrowful remembrances of death and suffering, ignorance and infirmity, diseases and temptations, decays and pains, false pleasures and violent passions, which are our constant exercise and misery, while we continue our journey through this valley of tears.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Comforts afforded good Men under their present Trouble.

SUCH are the frailties, such the incumbrances of a wretched mortal state ; wretched indeed, if considered, either with regard to the weight laid upon it, or its own inability to sustain the heavy load. But blessed, and for ever magnified be the mercy of our God ; who, while he afflicts and disciplines by his providence, does not leave us destitute of the powerful assistances and sweet consolations of his grace ! I feel myself indeed oppressed and pierced through with many sorrows, and anxious fears : my life, I know, must shortly have an end, the guilt of my sins strikes me with horror and amazement. For death, I am sensible, consigns me over to judgment, and the torments of hell are the due reward of my evil deeds ; and what defence to make for myself I cannot tell, in that day when every action, and word, and thought shall undergo a scrutiny more exact and severe than I at present am able to conceive.

These are such mortifying reflections, as must of necessity sink me into despair, did not my Lord, according to his wonted goodness, interpose, and in the midst of my lamentations and deep distress support my drooping soul, and assuage my anguish with prospect of mercy, when I shall stand most in need of it. By these exalting my hopes, and carrying my troubled mind to the tops of the everlasting hills, to the serene and peaceful regions of bliss ; strengthening my faith, and refreshing me in the pleasant pastures of the rivers of waters ; shewing me the plenteous provision made for the entertainment of wearied and

famished souls. This glorious sight makes me forget my sufferings, softens, and even recommends my present troubles, leaves me no longer grovelling upon the dust, but leaves earth and its vain objects behind. So that I then look down with disdain upon the tumults and dangers, the follies and miseries of this world; and with a mind perfectly composed, can rest myself upon thee, the true, the holy, the undisturbed peace of every truly pious and devout Christian.

CHAP. VIII.

An Act of Love and Devotion.

I LOVE thee, O my God, and desire to love thee every day more fervently. For thou art beautiful and amiable above the sons of men, and deservest an affection equal to thy own adorable and incomprehensible excellences. Equal to the marvellous instances of goodness, of which thy tender care for, and unspeakable condescensions in, working out the eternal salvation of mankind, hath given such plentiful, such astonishing proofs. O let that fire descend into my heart, which burns with a bright and holy flame, never languishing, never to be quenched. May every part of me feel the kindly heat, may it expand itself, and burn up every other passion: that all the dross of vain and polluted passions and desires being entirely consumed, I may be turned all into love, and know no other object of that love but thee alone, my dearest, sweetest, and most lovely Saviour.

By that most holy, that most precious blood, which thou wert content to shed upon the cross for our redemption; grant me, I beseech thee, the grace of a truly contrite and devout heart, at all times; but then especially, when I approach

thy Majesty in prayers and praises, and thankful commemorations of the mysterious methods of man's redemption, that most stupendous, most conspicuous, and everlasting monument of the Divine mercy. When I, (unworthy, I confess, of so high a privilege) prostrate myself before thy altar, and assist in that heavenly sacrifice, which thou, my undefiled high priest, hath instituted for a memorial and pledge of thy love; and for the daily repair of those breaches which sin and frailty make upon our souls, by these frequent and lively representations of that death and passion, by virtue whereof alone we are, or can be saved.

While I attend upon these holy mysteries, let my mind, I most humbly pray thee, be sensibly comforted, and my faith confirmed with the joys of thy blessed presence. Let me find thee nigh at hand, and be affected as becomes one, who justly values the honour and happiness of such a union with thee. Let my spiritual delights be ravishingly sweet, my love of thee exceeding strong and ardent, my inward hungerings after thee refreshed. For thou art the bread of life, every day eaten, yet still whole and never consumed: Lord, grant me evermore this nourishment: thou art the light eternal, never eclipsed, never extinct: O shine in my heart, warm, enlighten and sanctify me, that I may be a chosen vessel for thy use, purged from all wicked filth, filled with all grace, and ever preserving that fullness. So shall I spiritually feed upon thy flesh, and feel my soul effectually sustained in the strength of this heavenly repast; so shall I be nourished unto life indeed, and living of thee, and by thee, at last be conducted to thee, and for ever rest in thee.

O banquet of love, heavenly sweet, let my bowels be refreshed by thee, my inward part overflow with the nectar of thy love, and my soul

burst out with zealous expressions of thy praise continually. My God is love itself, sweeter than honey to my mouth, sustenance and joy; make me to live and grow in thee, and correct my vitiated palate, that I may truly relish thy heavenly delights, and lose all taste, all appetite for any other. Thou art the soul of my life, the staff of my hope, the end and sum of all my desires. O do thou possess my whole heart, preside over every faculty, direct my understanding, exalt my affections, and quench the thirst of my longing soul with those rivers of pleasures which flow at thy right hand for evermore. Let every fleshly and turbulent desire be awed into silence, and all imaginations of things in heaven, and air, and earth, flee from before thee. Let dreams and fancied revelations; let every word, and sign, and thought, give way; and even the soul itself stand mute, go out of itself, and be employed in the contemplation of thee alone; for thou art my hope and my only trust: and though the vileness of my own condition, and especially the infinite faults and frailties of my life, might reasonably shut me out from any hope, that so great and holy a God should admit so polluted a wretch into communion with him; yet in regard the Word of God hath condescended to dwell in my flesh, and united his Divine to our human nature, I can with confidence look up to that powerful intercessor at thy right hand, and will not doubt but I shall one day be exalted to the same blessed place, where my flesh and blood does in my Jesus already sit triumphant. To whom be praise and glory, honour and adoration, and thanksgiving, for ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. IX.

The Pleasure of meditating upon God.

HOW sweet, O gracious Lord, who in wonderful kindness hast so loved and saved, enlivened and sanctified, and exalted us, how inexpressibly sweet are the thoughts and the remembrance of thee! the more I dwell on these reflections, the more I feel my soul exhilarated and transported with them. The excellences of thy nature, and merciful dispensations of thy providence, I contemplate with the most abstracted simplicity of thought, that my present state is capable of; and feel the delights resulting from them swell to a pitch, as high as this distance of a sojourner in a strange land admits. More I covet earnestly, and daily aspire after, and can but covet and aspire after, during my confinement to a body of flesh and frailty. I am wounded with the darts of thy love, and burn with eager desire of seeing and being inseparably united to him whom my soul longeth to enjoy. I will therefore stand upon my guard, and take good heed to my ways; *I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding*, and exert my utmost activity in setting forth the praises of him, who hath made me his own by a double title; first by creating, and then by renewing and restoring my nature. My soul shall mount above the highest heavens, and in desire dwell with thee continually; that however my bodily presence detain me here below, yet in my inclinations and affections I may reside above, and so my heart be where thou, its best and most desirable treasure, art.

But pity, I beseech thee, gracious Lord, the impotence and infirmities of thy servant, who, the more he contemplates thine infinite majesty and

goodness, the more conscious he is of his disability to raise up to the dignity of that subject. My heart is too narrow, and thy unbounded excellences, thy beauty, and power, and glory, and love exceed the largest comprehensions of any human mind. As the brightness of thy majesty is inconceivable, so are the bowels of that everlasting mercy, by which thou adoptest them for thy own children, and receivedst them to be one with thyself, whom thou at first createdst out of nothing.

Consider, O my soul, the greatness of this love, and the noble privileges accruing to thee from it : for if thou hast just notions of these things, thou wilt be perfectly convinced, that if the enduring daily pains and sickness, nay, if the torments of hell itself for a season, were made the condition of beholding Christ in his glory, and being received into the number and society of the blessed above ; no sufferings could be so exquisite, that they ought not to be gladly entertained, none which would not find themselves abundantly recompensed, by obtaining a portion in that transcendent felicity. What though the devils then lay wait for us, and draw us into sharp trials of our virtue ; what though this body be macerated with fasting, fretted with sackcloth, fatigued with toil, and dried up with want of sleep ; what though my enemy deride, or rail against, or create me mischief and disquiet ; though cold, or want, or pain, or sickness, wear out a tedious life in sighs and incessant complaints ; let my strength be spent in heaviness, and my years in mourning ; let me roar for the very anguish of my heart, and my body have no soundness or whole part in it, provided I may find rest in the day of tribulation, and rejoice at *last in the felicity of thy chosen, and give thanks with thine inheritance.* (Ps. cvi. 5.)

For how can we esteem that glory according

to its worth, or what can be a purchase equivalent to that happiness, in which the face of every righteous man shall shine as the sun in its strength? When the Lord shall reckon up his people, and distribute them into their respective ranks, and the degrees of bliss differing from each other, in proportion to the good they have done in their respective bodies. When he shall put the faithful in possession of those promises they so long depended upon; and in exchange for earthly, give them heavenly, for temporal and transitory, eternal and never-fading goods; and make them who have acquitted themselves well in a very little, rulers over much. (Luke xix. 17.) Nothing sure can be added to the happiness of that day, when the Lord shall introduce his holy ones into his Father's presence, and to make them sit down with himself in heavenly places, that God may be all in all.

O bliss inexpressible, to see the saints, to be with them, to be one of them; to see God as he is, and to possess him for ever and ever! O let this bliss be often in our thoughts, always uppermost, nay, only in our desires: for it deserves the whole of us, and this is the method of insuring it to ourselves. For, if the greatness of the prize put you, as well it may, upon inquiring how you can ever hope to compass it, which way you can deserve it, or what assistances are necessary for this purpose, the answer is short and ready. For God hath so ordained that it is in every man's power to be happy, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence; (Matt. xi. 12.) to desire and resolve, and endeavour and strive, is to be qualified, and no man ever failed in his attempt, who was willing to take by force.

This kingdom is indeed an invaluable treasure; but yet every man is capable of being a purchaser, because the only price God expects for it is a

man's self. Give but yourself, and this will be looked upon as a consideration sufficient. And therefore never be discouraged at the disproportion betwixt what you can pay, and what you can hope to receive: for the purchase is paid by another hand to the utmost farthing. This was done when Christ gave himself; and he gave himself, that he might ransom you, and make your heart a kingdom for his Father to reign in. (Rom. vi. 12.) Deliver therefore yourself into his possession, that sin may no longer reign in your body unto death, but that God may dwell and reign in you by his Spirit, for the attainment of everlasting life.

How eager then, my soul, should we be to return to that heavenly city, where our home and our privileges are, where we are free denizens, and have our names enrolled in the book of God? Since therefore we are fellow-citizens with the saints, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, (Rom. viii. 17.) let us very diligently represent to ourselves the glorious advantages of these characters, and the bliss of our native place, in the best light our present thoughts can set them. Let us cry out with the prophet of old, *How excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of God*; (Ps. lxxxvii. 3.) all thy inhabitants are like them that sing, *Beautiful art thou for situation, and the joy of the whole earth*: (Ps. xlviii. 2.) into thy gates enter neither old age, nor decay, nor misery; no lame or maimed, no deformity or defect, but all grow up *into a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*. (Eph. iv. 13.)

What can be wanting, what be added, to the happiness of that life, which is never threatened with poverty or sickness, never molested with wrongs or violence, with anger or envy, or exorbitant desire: where all the present necessities of nature cease; and the restless ambition of ho-

nour and power, and riches find no place: where we are no longer in fear of any devil, or in danger of his temptations, or in so much as a possibility of his torments: where neither body nor soul can die, but both are endued with a life everlasting, ever delightful: no casualties, no malice, no quarrels or factions, but universal agreement, profound peace, and perfect love; where the day never declines, but a light as perpetual as it is glorious? *For that city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, but the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* (Rev. xxi. 23.) Nay, the saints, too, *shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever.* (Dan. xii. 3.)

Hence there is no night; nor darkness, nor clouds, no extremities of heat and cold, but such a happy temper in all respects, as *no eye hath seen, or ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of any man to conceive;* (1 Cor. ii. 9.) except those happy souls, whom their own experience shall instruct, and whose names are written in the book of life. To all which we may add the honour and happiness of associating with patriarchs and prophets, of conversing with apostles, and martyrs, and saints, and all those dear relations and friends, who went thither before us. These are very glorious advantages; but that which far excels them all, is, that we shall see the face of God, and ever admire and gaze upon, and rejoice in his excellent glory. O happiness inestimable, when we shall see God as he is in himself; when we shall see him, and enjoy him ourselves, and when this sight and fruition shall never have any interruption, any end.

CHAP. X:

Of loving God, and the Advantages of doing so.

THE soul, which is stamped with the image of God, and is glorious in proportion to her conformity with his holiness, hath from her Maker an innate principle which reminds her of her duty, and enables her either to persevere stedfast with God, or quickly to return to him, if at any time, through the violence of her passions, or any other imperfections, she be drawn aside. Nor hath she only hopes of preserving a spiritual life, by the reviving prospect of mercy and pardon, but is allowed to aim at higher matters, and aspire to enter into strict bonds of inviolable amity with God, and to be yoked in love with the King of angels.

Of such mighty efficacy is love, if it bring our will to a resemblance of God, and assimilate us to that object by inclination, which we already resemble by nature; all which is done, when we love as we are beloved. For love is the only motion and affection of the soul, which can qualify a creature to answer the ends of its Creator, and to make, though not a full, yet an acceptable and thankful compensation for all his goodness to it. Where love takes place, it presently gets dominion, and brings over all the rest of the affections in subjection to itself. Love is of itself sufficient, and pleases for its own sake. This is reputed desert, this is both the duty and the reward; the cause and the effect of doing well: by this we are reconciled and intimately united to God.

Love makes two minds become one: it inspires the same inclinations and the same aversions: it is the standard and rule, by which we frame our actions and dispositions: it considers things pre-

sent as though they were not ; and looks upon heavenly and spiritual things with a pure unprejudiced view. It first prevails with men to behave themselves decently in matters of this world, and then raises their thoughts above this world, so to despise all below, and at last to fix their view upon those of another, and dwell with delight upon the mysterious excellences of God himself. It lets us into those beauties of the Divine nature, which are otherwise too high and dark for us to behold, and helps us to imitate what it helps to see and to admire!

God the Father is love, God the Son is love, God the Holy Ghost is the Father's and the Son's love. This love requires the production of somewhat like it in ourselves ; such a mutual affection, I mean, as may unite us to, and render us nearly related to itself. Love is an enemy to distance and formal respect ; it gives us confidence in approaching to God, aspires after a friendly and familiar conversation with him, and emboldens us to speak to him without fear or doubting. He lives to no purpose who lives without this grace. But he that keeps his eye always fixed upon God, as the supreme, the sole object of his thoughts and desires, he meditates upon him, delights in him, is fed and nourished by him.

A man thus devoted to him, sings his praises, pours out his prayers, reads his word, performs every part of his duty, and demeans himself in every action of his life with such care and circumspection, as if his bodily eyes saw God present (as in truth he is present) with him, in every thing he says or does. His prayers are so fervent, and his mind in them so exalted, as if it were no longer in the body, but translated and wrapt up into that glorious place, where *thousand thousands of angels prostrate themselves* before the throne of the majesty on high, and *ten thousand*

times ten thousand minister unto him. (Dan. vii. 10.) The soul which is visited by love, is effectually awakened out of its sleep; it is softened and instructed, and smitten with its force. This turns darkness into light, opens that which was shut, warms and fires that which was frozen, smooths the rough and angry, and impatient, chases away vicious and subdues carnal affections, corrects the temper, and renews the spirit of the inner man. It is an effectual check to the follies and the levities of youth, and a strong guard against spiritual danger and temptations. So sensible, so strong is the power of love, when cherished and present with us; but when this cools or quite goes out, our good dispositions languish and die, and can no more be preserved than fire without fuel, or the boiling of a pot, when the heat is taken from under it.

Great are the advantages of this virtue, which gives the soul immediate access with confidence to God, and stands in no need of any introducer, which preserves a close union with him, and consults him freely upon any emergency that requires his counsel and help. A soul thus affected hath God continually in his thoughts, and discourse, and despises, disdains every thing besides. All its reflections, all its conversation relish of this love, so entirely is the man in the possession of it. The way to know God truly is to love him. It is to very little purpose that we read, or meditate, that we hear, or preach, or pray, if this be not at the bottom of our religious exercises: for by loving God we come to love our own souls, and to be solicitous for their safety and true happiness. The end of God's loving us, is, that we may love him in return; and the requiring this at our hands, is a fresh instance of his favour, because he knows that they who love him are sure to be happy upon that very account.

The soul that loves, renounces all its own appetites, and attends to this only, that so it may answer the end of being loved by loving again. And though in our payment of this tribute we be never so profuse, yet what, alas! is this in comparison of that inexhausted source of love, ever running over, ever flowing in upon us? For we greatly mistake, if we have the vanity to imagine, that what we pay, and what we receive, the soul and God, the creature and the Creator, can ever meet upon equal terms. But if a man love with his whole heart, though this be nothing as to any intrinsic value of its own, yet it is esteemed not to be defective, because he is capable of no more. Let not the soul then that thus loves God be discouraged; the only just cause of fear is, when we do not love him as we may and ought.

The soul that loves after this manner, is eager in her wishes, fixed in her desires, lays no stress upon her best actions, but thinks all she can do too little; is not terrified by the majesty of God, but ravished with delight in the contemplation of his mercy, takes sanctuary in his goodness, and converses with him frequently and freely. This does, as it were, carry the man out of himself, and make him act separately from his bodily senses, that he seems to have no longer any regard to himself, but is entirely swallowed up in God. Nor are these airy and romantic notions, but such as every one's own experience will confirm to him, when transported with the unspeakable sweetness of heavenly meditations. He does then as it were make an escape from every other object, that he may be diverted and interrupted by no other thoughts, but enjoy perfect happiness, and give himself up entirely to God. Nothing could add to this ravishing satisfaction, were but the continuance equal to the intenseness of it. For the love of God contracts an intimate ac-

quaintance with him, that acquaintance begets an assurance, that assurance creates a sensible delight, and that delight breeds a desire of more and greater intimacies. A soul thus inflamed is full of longings and thirstings, and often cries out with the psalmist, *Like as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.* (Ps. xlii. 1.)

Love brought down God to men ; this induced him to dwell among men ; this moved him to be himself made man : He in his nature is invisible ; but this rendered him not only visible, but, in wonderful condescension, like to his own servants ; it was love that wounded him for our transgression ; incomprehensible, unexampled love, that made his soul heavy to the death, and poured out his heart's blood upon the cross. Love, that provided a sure retreat for miserable sinners, by opening that passage to their Saviour's heart : for thither now I can betake myself, and what I want of merit of myself, supply out of the bowels of my pierced Redeemer. There is a perpetual spring of mercy, and through the orifice in his body I can approach the recesses of his soul. These wounds unlock the mystery of godliness, and shew me that tender compassion of my Lord, whereby the *day-spring from on high visited* lost wretches, *when they sate in darkness, and in the shadow of death.* (Luke i. 78.)

The wounds of Christ are full of pity, full of virtue, full of sweetness and kindness inexpressible. They pierced his hands and his feet, and thrust through his side with a spear. By these passages I can taste and see how gracious my Lord hath been ; for he is indeed gentle, and long suffering, and of great pity to all them that call upon him faithfully, to all that seek him diligently, to all that love him, who hath so wonderfully first loved them. In the wounds of our

blessed Saviour we have plenteous redemption, and there we may find abundant goodness, ravishing delight, fulness of grace, and perfection of virtue.

CHAP. XI.

The good Effects of meditating on Christ's Death and Sufferings.

WHEN any sinful imagination solicits me, I straight take sanctuary in my Saviour's wounds. When the flesh weighs down my soul, the remembrance of his sufferings breaks all my fetters, and sets me free by heavenly thoughts again. When the devil lays his snares to entrap and destroy me, I flee for help to the tender mercies of my dying Lord, and the enemy soon feels himself disappointed and draws off. If lust be kindled in my breast, and stir my body to rebellion, I reflect on the agonies of the Son of God for my sake, and presently those impure fires are quenched. In any sort of suffering or distress I find no comfort, no relief comparable to the consideration of my afflicted Saviour: in his wounds I can lay me down and sleep securely; these are my defence and the support of my soul in any temptation that assaults me, in any affliction that befalls me.

Christ died for us; surely then the bitterness of death is past, and nothing can be so grievous to human nature, that it may not be mollified by this consideration. In that death of his is all my hope and trust, I plead no other merit, I ask no other refuge; this is my health, my life, nay, my second and better life, my resurrection from the dead. His mercies are great, unmeasurably great, and how worthless soever I may be in myself, yet while I am looked upon as having a share in

these, I cannot be rejected or despised. For his mercies prove him willing to save, and therefore his power is no longer a terror, but my best security.

I am indeed a very grievous sinner, and my conscience upbraids me with numberless and heinous transgressions against God and his most righteous laws; but notwithstanding these reproaches of my own breast, make me sometimes uneasy and afraid, yet do I not despair; because *where sin hath abounded, there grace hath much more abounded.* (Rom. vi. 1.) Nay, I must not, I dare not despair; for this were to bind one fault upon another, and to aggravate all the wickedness I had ever been guilty of before. For he that despairs of forgiveness for his offences, does in effect declare, that God is not merciful; and by distrusting, robs him of his beloved attribute, which is the highest outrage and injustice that any man can possibly commit against God. He does, as much as in him lies, bear testimony in contradiction to that love, and truth, and power, which are the only foundation, on which all hopes are built. For how could I hope had not his love adopted me, had not his truth promised, had not his power redeemed me? Let then my foolish misgivings murmur within me never so importunately, let them ask me never so insultingly, what can I pretend to, or how dare I presume to suppose, that any deserts of mine should prove me so excellent, so very disproportionate reward; still my hope stands firm, and I reply with assurance, as St. Paul had left no uncertain, *I know whom I have believed,* (2 Tim. i. 12) and am persuaded, that he who made me his Son by adoption, loves me exceedingly. He who is true, will be as good as his word. He who is Almighty can lie no more. He cannot to make it good; he can

to the uttermost, and the very promising shews him as willing as he is able to do it.

My sins are not only great, but many ; but neither their quality nor their number terrifies me, when the death of my Saviour comes into my mind ; because I know they cannot in either respect outweigh his sufferings upon my account. The nails and spear proclaim my deliverance, and attest my reconciliation with Christ, provided I sincerely love him. The soldier opened me an entrance into his side, and into the clefts of those wounds I can retreat with safety. If any man be afraid of his condition, let him learn to love ; for this love will be sure to cast out all anxious and desponding fear. Our Redeemer stretched out his arms upon the cross, by that posture to signify his readiness to receive sinners into his embraces, when they flee to him for succour. In those dear arms I delight to live, and in them I desire to die. There can I with a light and joyful heart sing with the prophet, *I will magnify thee, O Lord, for thou hast set me up, and not made my foes to triumph over me.* (Ps. xxxi. 1.) Our kind Saviour bowed his head when he gave up the Ghost, and in so doing stooped down to meet and to kiss his beloved ones. And every one of us may be properly said to kiss our Lord, every time we feel our hearts sensibly wounded, and devoutly affected with his love.

And shall not this be the constant effect of our meditations upon it? Yes sure, my soul, since thou art honoured by the impress and character of thy great Maker, since thou art ransomed with the most precious blood of thy Redeemer, since thou art betrothed to this Divine spouse by faith, endowed with his Spirit, adorned with his graces, and advanced to the dignity of angels in his gracious desigus for thy everlasting felicity ; do thy diligence to love him, who hath so wonderfully

loved thee: set thy heart upon him, who sets his upon thee; seek him who hath so solicitously sought thee; whose goodness hath prevented thee, and is the cause of thine. He is the merit, he the reward, he the fruit and the end of thy love, Conform thyself therefore in all things to him; let his care excite thine, his leisure entertain thine, be clean with the clean, and holy with the holy. Such as thou presentest thyself before God, such apprehensions it is plain thou entertainest concerning him. If thou believest him full of meekness and goodness and mercy, thou canst not but conclude, that he expects all his children should be gentle and kind, compassionate and humble. Strive to be like him then, and let this likeness prove, (for nothing else can prove it) that thou dost truly love him, whose compassion brought thee out of the mire and clay, and drew thee back from the bottomless pit of destruction.

Choose him for thy friend, and prefer him before all other friends, who when all other confidences forsook and betrayed thee, was the only one that stuck close to thee in thy extremity. In the day of thy death, when no friend else will or can do thee service, he will not desert thee: then will this kind Saviour be sure to stand by thee, and save thee from the reproof of him that would eat thee up; deliver thy soul from those roaring lions that wait ready to tear it in pieces, and carry it up on high through unknown ways; bring thee to the heavenly Jerusalem, and place thee amongst angels in his own presence, where thou shalt hear that heavenly song, holy, holy, holy, &c. There is the voice of joy and health, of thanksgiving and praise, and never-ceasing *hallelujahs*: there is the perfection of happiness, and glory, and gladness, and every thing desirable and good.

Pant eagerly, my soul, and let all thy desires loose after this blessed place: that thou mayest

come into that city above, of which such glorious things are spoken. And love will carry thee thither, how steep soever the ascent may seem. For this surmounts all difficulties, and leaves nothing impossible to the person actuated by it. This takes frequent flights thither even while upon earth, and walks with great freedom through the streets of Jerusalem above; it visits the patriarchs and prophets and apostles, beholds with wonder the regular armies of martyrs and confessors, and the beauty of chaste and holy virgins. In short, both heaven and earth, and every thing in each, are ever inculcating this duty; that I ought to *love the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength.* (Mat. xxii. 37.)

But, were not this necessary in point of duty, yet it is absolutely so in point of interest and prudence. For when the heart of man is not fixed upon this object, it is never fixed any where! but roves about perpetually from one thing to another, seeking rest where it is never to be found. Now the reason why it can never meet with satisfaction in any of these frail and transitory matters, which captivate its affections, is because the soul is above them all, and of a condition so excellent, that no good but the supreme good can answer its desires, or prove its adequate happiness. For God hath endued it with such a principle of liberty, that it cannot be compelled to the commission of any sin. And therefore every man's salvation or damnation turns at last upon his own choice. Hence no man can bring a richer present to God, than an honest and good heart. This brings God down to us, and carries us up to him. By this we love God, and choose God, and arrive at him, and attain to the enjoyment of him.

This is the thing, that by the assistance of Divine grace renews us, and restores our primitive likeness to God: this is of so great account with him,

that his Spirit will not dwell with them that have it not. This engages him to be with us, and reign in us, and makes the soul a receptacle for the majesty of the whole Trinity. The wisdom of God enlightens it to the knowledge of the truth. The love of God inflames it with a desire of his goodness; and the fatherly affection of God preserves his own creature, that the holy motions he inspires, and the person inspired by them, should not perish.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Knowledge of the Truth.

BUT what is it to know the truth, and by what steps do we come to it? The first is, for a man to be thoroughly acquainted with himself, to make it his business to be what he ought to be, and to correct and reform whatever he finds amiss in himself. The next is to know and to love the God that made him: for this is the *whole*, the duty and the happiness of *man*. Now, in order hereunto, we shall do well to observe, how exceeding good God hath been to us, and what obligations we have to love him in return. He made us out of nothing, when we had no being; and all we have received ever since we came into being is his gift. But, because we are degenerated in our affections, and loved the gift more than the Giver, the creature more than the Creator, we fell into the snare of the tempter, and became the servants of sin and the devil. When we were reduced to this miserable condition, God looked upon us with an eye of pity, and sent his Son to break our chains, and release us from our slavery. He sent his Holy Spirit too, the Spirit of adoption, and exalted his servants to the dignity of sons. He gave his Son to be our ransom, and his Holy Spirit to be the pledge of his

love, and he reserves the whole of himself for our future reward and inheritance.

Thus God in infinite compassion and kindness, for the exceeding tenderness he bore to mankind, hath not only been liberal in his blessings, but hath even laid out himself for our advantage; that he might restore lost man, not so much to God, who could not suffer by that loss, as to his own self, who must have been otherwise irreparably undone by it. That men might be born of God, God condescended to be born of man. And what heart is so insensible, so hard and flinty, as not to be softened with such astonishing advances of love; a love which began entirely on God's part, and was so strangely great, that he vouchsafed to become man, purely for the sake and benefit of man? Who can hate any other man, whose nature and likeness he sees in the Son of God made man? Certain it is, that he who hates his brother, does by necessary consequence hate God; and he who hates God, will find that all his pretended good works are nothing worth.

Now God was made man for our sakes, that he who had been our Creator might be our Redeemer also, and that the human nature might contribute to its own redemption. Again, God appeared in the likeness of man, that by his condescension man might be better acquainted with God, and love him with a more free and tender affection, whom he saw stoop down to the same level, and a sort of equality with himself. Thus all the faculties of our souls are made happy in the contemplation of him: Those of the rational, in his Divine perfections, and those of the sensitive, in his human body. So admirably contrived is this mystery of godliness to engage our affections, that man in every capacity might meet with objects suitable to him; and, whether he go in or out, might find pasture in his God and Saviour.

Such are the benefits of the Son of God in our flesh, all which are more complete by the mission of the Holy Spirit. The Son was born, and crucified, and died for us, that by that death of his he might destroy the death which before had dominion over us. Now, when the grape of flesh was squeezed in the wine-press of the cross, the Spirit of grace was sent to cleanse our hearts that we might be vessels prepared, and meet for our Master's use, and *new wine might be put into new bottles*. This was necessary, first, that our hearts being purged, the liquor put into them might not be tainted; and then, that being sealed up, what they contained might not be lost. They are cleansed, when they cease to rejoice in, and have no longer any relish for sin, and they are sealed up, when fortified against temptations, and the seducements of vain and worldly delights. For that which is good could not be received by them, till that which was evil was first taken away. The love of sin pollutes, the love of vanity spills the wine; the former fouls the vessel, the latter makes it leaky.

The love of sin makes us delight in that which is evil: the love of vanity engages our affections to things unprofitable and of no continuance. Put away therefore the evil, that you may make room for the good: pour out the bitter and the vapid, that you may be filled with the generous and delicious. The Holy Ghost is joy and love: cast out the spirit of the devil and of this world, and you shall receive the Spirit of God. The spirit of the devil disposes us to love sin, the spirit of this world to delight in empty and imaginary joys. These are both evil; for the former is directly vicious, and the other hath a tendency to vice: but when these spirits are dispossessed, the Spirit of God will succeed into their place. He will enter into the tabernacle of thy heart, and produce holy joy and holy love. The love of the world allures, and

deceives, and betrays ; the love of sin defiles and destroys, and therefore these must be expelled by their contraries : and such is the love of God. For this enlightens the understanding, purifies the conscience, fills the soul with true joy, and leads us to the sight and knowledge of God, and his glorious perfections.

CHAP. XIII.

The Marks and Fruits of true Love.

THE man that truly loves God is always thinking when he shall be so happy as to be with him, when he shall leave the world, and make an escape out of this prison of corruption, that his soul may be free, and find perfect ease and peace : and, even while in the flesh, he lives not after the flesh, but sends his thoughts and desires up to heaven before him, sitting or standing, in motion or at rest, in every posture, in every action, he keeps God continually in his mind. He is very zealous in persuading others to love God, and representing to them the duty and advantage of doing so : he endeavours to convince them how pleasant this is, and how unsatisfactory and tormenting the love of the world. And to prove that all this is not mere cant and affectation, his temper, his whole conversation speak him to be in very good earnest, and confirm the truth of his arguments.

The honours and riches of this present life he looks down upon with a just disdain ; pities or despises the misery of those who take such pains about them ; shews how extremely foolish it is, to place one's confidence in things that are continually flying from one ; wonders at the blindness and stupidity of the wretches that doat upon them ; and that every body does not see so little in them as to quit these for somewhat more substantial. He is

satisfied, that would they submit to make the experiment without prejudice or passion, all the world would approve his better choice, find inexpressible pleasure in what he loves, and be fully satisfied in the truth of that which is to him evident beyond a doubt. He frequently entertains himself with the contemplations of God, and feels a wonderful comfort and refreshment from them ; the more sensible and sweet in proportion as they are oftener repeated : for that which is always worthy of our praise and love, cannot but be always delightful to our thoughts.

This is indeed the true peace of the soul, when it gets loose from all distraction of thought, and contracts all its desires into God alone, as their proper centre. This leaves no vacant space for other inclinations, but all is full of that which employs it, and entirely contented with the pleasure resulting from thence. And if at any time it happen, (as sometimes during this frail state it will) that any trifling thought, or multiplicity of business come in between, all this is looked upon as a digression or impertinence, and the man makes all the haste that possibly he can, back to his main point. To dwell upon any thing else he looks upon as a punishment like that of being banished from one's own country. For as there is no moment of our lives, in which we do not taste some fresh instance of God's goodness, so should there not be any neither, in which this great Benefactor, who is continually present by his mercies, should not be present also in our thoughts and thankful remembrances.

This consideration must needs make the fault of those men very great, who when they come to, and converse with God in prayer, presently dismiss all their devout affections, and behave themselves as though he neither saw nor heard them. And thus does every one who pursues his own sin-

ful or worldly designs, and prefers some worthless creature, by which his mind is easily diverted from better and more important considerations. And prefer such he does before God, who employs more of his pains and thoughts upon this, than he does upon God; who ought to be perpetually there, and constantly remembered as our Creator, adored as our Redeemer, waited for as our Saviour, feared as our Judge.

Consider therefore, man, when the world begins to get within thee, what thou art doing, and where this course will end : withdraw thyself by degrees from business and noise ; and run away from the confusion and perplexity of a distracted mind. Unload thy cares, and give a little of thy time to God ; enter into thy chamber and commune with thy own heart ; let none be admitted into these retirements, besides Him, and such assistants as may be useful in the search after him. Then let thy heart sincerely profess with the prophet, *Thou hast said, seek ye my face—thy face, Lord, will I seek.* (Psal. xxvii. 8.) Yea, Lord, I covet earnestly, but all in vain, except thou teach my heart, where and how to seek, where and how to find thee. For if thou art not here, whither shall I go to look thee? But if thou art not only here, but every where, how comes it to pass, that I do not discern thee? I am told thou dwellest *in the light, which no man can approach unto* : and how vain is the attempt to go in quest of a person inaccessible? Or who shall conduct me thither, that I may see thee there, whither it seems no human power can come? But by what marks should I distinguish thee, having never seen thy face? What shall this miserable stranger do, that longs impatiently to behold thee, laments his distance, and knows not how to shorten it; would gladly find thee, and cannot tell where thou dwellest; desires to possess thee, and yet does not know thy face?

O Lord, thou art my God, and I thy creature, doubly thy creature, by nature first, and afterward by grace: all I ever had, and all I hope for, is of thy hand alone, and yet I have not seen thee at any time, neither know thee: nay, for this very end was I created, that I might see thee, and have not all this while attained the intent of my creation. Hard fate of them, who answer not the end for which they were at all! Yet such is now the case of miserable man; he is fallen from the happiness to which he was designed, into the misery which was never intended for him. That is departed from him, without which there can be no happiness; and that remains with him, which in its own nature is exquisitely miserable. Man did once eat that angels food, which he now hungers after; but now he eats the bread of affliction, with which he then was utterly unacquainted.

How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget me, for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? (Ps. xiii. 1.) When wilt thou turn again and hear us? When, O when, wilt thou enlighten our eyes, and shew us the light of thy countenance, and restore thyself to us? O turn thee unto us again, that it may be well with us, for without thee we must of necessity be miserable. Call us, and help us to come nigh unto thee, we beseech thee; our heart is overwhelmed with bitterness and anguish, by reason of its forlorn and desolate condition: O let us be refreshed with the sweetness of thy consolations. I hunger after thee, let me not be sent empty away; but gratify the appetite which thou hast approved, which thou thyself hast infused.

I am bowed down with my infirmities, and not able to lift up my eyes to heaven: O loose me from this bond, and make me straight, that I may see and seek after thee. *My wickednesses are gone over my head, and become a sore burden too heavy for me to bear. (Ps. xxxviii. 4.)* O let thy mighty hand

take off this weight, lest I sink under it, and the pit shut her mouth upon me. Teach me how to seek thee; for even this I cannot do without thy guidance: nor can I find thee, till thou art pleased in mercy to shew thyself to me. Let me so seek as to desire, and so desire as diligently to seek thee; so love as to find; and so find as entirely to love thee.

CHAP. XIV.

The exquisite Goodness of God.

I ACKNOWLEDGE, O Lord, with all due thankfulness, that goodness of thine, which created me after thy own likeness, that I might contemplate, and love, and copy after my great original. But, alas! this image of thine is so sullied with sin, so darkened with the fumes of sensual lusts, that it can no longer attain to the resemblance thou intendest it for, unless thou please to take it again into thy hands, and refresh the impression. Grant me, therefore, gracious Lord, not only a stedfast faith, but a right understanding, that I may know as much of thee as thou seest necessary for my purpose: for such thou art in thyself, as thou hast taught us to believe concerning thee. And we are taught to believe thee a Being, to which nothing can be imagined superior in greatness or in goodness. Now, what being can this be, except such a one as hath all perfection in itself, as only exists from itself, and gave existence to all other things by creating them out of nothing? What goodness then can be wanting in the supreme and original Cause of good in all besides? Thou must be therefore just, and true, and happy, and every other perfection which is more desirable to be, than not to be.

But if justice in perfection be thy essence and nature, how comes it to pass, that thou dost not

exert it to the uttermost upon the wicked who provoke it? Is it because perfect and incomprehensible goodness is equally natural and essential to thee? This is a difficulty wrapped up in that light which no man can approach unto. In the impenetrable abyss of thy goodness, there rises it seems a spring, from whence issue out the streams of thy mercy: for there is a most exact harmony between all thy glorious attributes; and being so sovereignly and perfectly just, as at the same time to be sovereignly and perfectly good, thy compassion to sinners makes no inconsistency between these seemingly contradictory excellences: for thy goodness, it is evident, would be less, if no ill men had any experience of it; and he is more perfectly good; who extends his kindness to good and bad men both, than he who confines it to the good only; and so is he, who exercises his goodness in sparing and punishing too, than he who exerts it in no other instance, but that of punishing. This therefore gives a rational account of thy mercy to them who least deserve it, that, being perfectly good, thou canst not but in consequence of that be merciful.

O inexhaustible unmeasurable goodness, which so far surpasseth our largest conceptions, let me also partake of thy mercy, which is so rich, so unbounded: let thy clemency spare, and prevent the vengeance which I have cause to dread from thy angry justice: let that mercy which is ever flowing out of thee, shed itself upon me. Rouse up thyself, my soul, and stretch thy intellectual powers to their utmost length, that thou mayest have the most sublime and worthy apprehensions of the Divine goodness, that this imperfect dim state will admit.

If each good thing we see and desire below be delightful singly, consider well, how exquisitely so that good must be, which is universal, and con-

tain in itself the charms of all the good things that are, and ever were, or shall be. And those not such charms as we find and are fond of in created beings, but as much above them, as infinite excels finite, and the Creator the creature. If then life derived from another be good, how excellent is that life, by which all else do live? If our wisdom be so pleasant and desirable, which reaches no farther than the consideration of objects that present themselves to us; how lovely, how adorable is that wisdom, by which those objects were so admirably contrived, nay, commanded out of nothing? In short, if different objects, according to their vast variety yield so very transporting, so very different delights, think how inexpressibly full of delight He is, who communicated to each out of his own fulness, and so both made all these objects and made them delightful? O the inestimable bliss of them that shall possess this good! What will they have? What will they not have? They will have nothing, to be sure, which they had rather not have. They will be secure of every thing that can make soul and body both happy: so great, so manifold, so perfect bliss, as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.*

CHAP. XV.

The Happiness of the Saints hereafter.

WHY dost thou then, deluded creature, let thy desires run wild upon variety of objects, and from these vainly expect, that soul and body should be happy? Love that one good, in which all others centre, and this will answer all thy wishes: whatever can contribute to the perfection of thy outward or inward man, is there to be met with in abundance. If beauty delight thee,

the righteous are promised to *shine as the sun*: (Matt. xiii. 43.) If activity or strength, or freedom of operation, which no resistance can obstruct, remember they shall be *as the angels of God*, and that *which is sown a natural body shall be raised a spiritual body*; (1 Cor. xv. 44.) that is, it shall resemble those spirits in its activity and penetration, and powers, though not in nature and substance.

If length of days, and a sound constitution be thy desire, there shall be health unimpaired, and immortality; for *the just shall live for ever*, and their health is of the Lord. If gratification of desires to the full; they *shall be satisfied when they wake up after their Lord's likeness*. (Ps. xvii. 15.) If musical entertainment, there the angels never cease their melodious praises to God: if any chaste pleasures; of such God *shall give them to drink, as out of a river*. (Ps. xxxvi. 8.) If wisdom, the most wise God shall then unlock his treasures, and let them into the knowledge of his own mysterious nature and providence. If friendship, there they shall love God above themselves, and one another as themselves; and God shall love them more than they love themselves. It must be so, since they love him and one another, by and for him, and he loves himself and them by and for himself. If perfect agreement, there shall be but one soul and one will, for they shall all have no will but God's. If power, they shall be absolute masters of their own will, as God is of his: for as God can do whatever he pleases by his own power, so they shall be enabled to do whatever they please, by and through him: for as they shall will nothing but what he will, so he wills whatever they will, and therefore whatever they will must needs be accomplished. If honour and riches, God shall make his *faithful and good servants rulers over many things*; (Luke xix. 17.) nay, they shall be dignified with the title of gods, and the *sons of*

God, and shall be actually heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. If secure possession, they shall have as much assurance, that no part of their happiness shall ever forsake them, as they can have that they can never consent to part with it; and that God who loved them so as to vest them in it, can never take it away from them he loves so dearly against their consent; or as they know that nothing is stronger than God, or can separate between him and them. And who can conceive the excellency and greatness of that joy, which must needs result from so inconceivably excellent and great a good?

O heart of man, ever wanting somewhat to make up thy satisfaction, every day exercised with pains and sorrows, and almost quite oppressed with the mighty weight and uninterrupted succession of miseries, how wouldest thou exult, should all these blisses flow in upon thee? Ask thy most secret recesses whether they could so expand themselves, as to receive the joy which must needs spring up from such exquisite happiness, considered purely as thy own only. But further yet, consider that if any other person, equally dear to thee as thy own self, should enjoy the same happiness, this would double thy joy, because thou wouldest be as glad for his sake as for thy own: Again, if two, or three, or more, thus dear to thee were in the same blessed condition, this joy would be multiplied equally for every one of these. Now according to this way of arguing, what can we suppose will be the rejoicing in heaven, where angels and saints innumerable partake of the happiness, which I have been but very imperfectly describing, and every one of these united in a charity so fervent, that none of them loves any of the rest less than himself, and consequently will rejoice for each of them as much as for himself?

If then the heart of man be scarce large enough

to contain his joy, for his own single happiness, how shall it find room for so many joys so vastly increased, so often multiplied? Again, in regard we naturally rejoice in the felicity of another in proportion to the love we bear to that person; it will follow from hence, that since in that state God is incomparably more dear to every saint, than that saint is to himself, and all his brethren to him; every saint will consequently feel more satisfaction, and exult incomparably more in the glory and blessedness of God, than he will in his own and all his brethren's put together. And if they so love God with all their heart, and all their mind and soul, that even all their heart and mind and soul, wants room for the largeness of their affection; they will certainly rejoice too with all their heart, and mind and soul so exquisitely, that even all their heart and mind and soul shall overflow and be too narrow to contain the fulness of their joy.

Tell me then, O my God and my Lord, my hope and the delight of my heart, whether this be the joy meant by thy blessed Son, when he says to his disciples, *Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* (John xvi. 24.) For I have here discovered a joy, that seems not only full, but even more than full: since, after all our faculties are filled, there still remains fresh matter for rejoicing; matter more than can be comprehended, more than can ever be exhausted: and therefore the whole of that joy can never enter into the persons partaking in it, but they may very properly be said to *enter into the joy of their Lord.* (Mat. xxv. 21.)

Say then, Lord, and inform thy servant, whether this be the joy, into which thy faithful servants shall enter, whose diligence in improving their Lord's talents shall be commended and rewarded at the great day of account. But that, I am told, is a joy never yet seen, or heard, or so much as conceived by any human mind; and consequently

I have not yet either in words or thoughts come up near to the excellence of that joy prepared for thy chosen. In short, their joy shall be equal to their love, and their love equal to their knowledge of thee : and certainly the perfection of their love and knowledge of thee in the next life, must needs exceed all that ever eye hath seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived.

Grant me then, even me, my dearest Lord, to know thee, and love thee, and rejoice in thee. And, if I cannot do these perfectly in this life, let me at least advance to higher degrees every day, till I can come to do them in perfection. Let the knowledge of thee increase in me here, that it may be full hereafter. Let the love of thee grow every day more and more here, that it may be perfect hereafter ; that my joy may be great in itself, and full in thee. I know, O Lord, that thou art a God of truth, O make good thy gracious promises to me, that my joy may be full. And till it be so, let my mind meditate, my tongue speak, my heart desire and love, my soul hunger, my flesh thirst after it, and my whole nature gasp and pant most earnestly, till I actually enter into the joy of my Lord, there to remain for ever and ever, *Amen*.

The End of the Manual.

St. Anselm's

MEDITATIONS

CONCERNING THE
REDEMPTION OF MANKIND.

Book V.

CHAP. I.

O CHRISTIAN soul, raised from the worst of deaths, redeemed and released from the most wretched of all slaveries, by the blood of Christ, lift up thyself, remember thy spiritual resurrection, congratulate thy own freedom and deliverance. Consider what and where the power of thy salvation is ; dwell upon this subject, and delight thyself in the thankful contemplation of it. Shake off thy spiritual inappetence, commit a holy violence upon thy heart, and engage it to taste thy Saviour's goodness, and to be inflamed with his love. Suck those words which are sweeter than honey, and chew upon that food which is not only pleasant to thy taste, but wholesome for thy health and sustenance : for then dost thou suck this honeycomb, then dost thou swallow and chew upon this food, when thou studiest, and understandest, and lovest, and rejoicest in the gracious declarations of what God hath in mercy done for thy salvation.

Where then and what is the mighty power of thy Saviour? Christ *is thy resurrection and thy life*: (John xi. 25.) This is the good *Samaritan* who pitied thy distress, covered thy nakedness, and healed thy wounds: (Luke x. 33.) this is the kind friend, who hath delivered thee at the expense of his own life. And therefore the power of thy salvation is the power of Christ. This is he that had *horns coming out of his hands, and there was the hiding of his power*. (Hab. iii. 4.) For his hands were nailed to the cross; and yet, what strength was there in that weakness? what exaltation in that humility? what respect due to that ignominy and contempt? His power was hid indeed, when veiled by such an appearance of weakness, his glory under a humility that stooped so low, and submitted to such insolence and injurious treatment.

But still how wondrous was this power! For a man hanging upon a tree to execute that eternal death, to which mankind were liable, and nail to his own cross that very wickedness which crucified him! For one condemned to die with thieves, to save sinners, condemned to be tormented with devils; and *when lifted up from the earth* in this infamous manner, to *draw all the world to him*. (John xii. 32.) For one expiring in agonies unspeakable to release wretches innumerable from the pains of hell; and by undergoing the death of the body, to take away and destroy the death of so many souls.

CHAP. II.

BUT what my merciful, and most mighty Redeemer, what was the reason of thy choosing to conceal such glory and power under so much humility and contempt? It could not be with a design to keep the devil or the world in igno-

rance, with an intent to deceive. He who is truth itself cannot conceive deceit, and though he may be said sometimes to hinder men from knowing the truth, yet such expressions mean no more, than that he suffers them to continue ignorant, who through their own fault know no better. But it is plain; thou didst not take the human nature to keep thyself altogether unknown, but to reveal what was not known before; thou didst declare thyself to be very God and very man, and by thy doings and sufferings didst evidently demonstrate thyself to be both.

The mystery indeed was of its own nature dark, but it was not made industriously so: nor was its obscurity contrived to hide it from the world, but necessary for the accomplishment of those great ends, by methods which God saw most agreeable to his wise purposes. And when we read of this mystery being hid, we are only to understand, that it was not made manifest to all. For though truth do not fully discover itself to every body, yet it does not shun or deny access to any body. Thou didst not therefore thus order the matter, either with an intention to deceive, or that any might thereby deceive himself; but didst bear constant testimony to the truth, that this gracious dispensation might be complete in all its parts. If therefore men were led into error, the fault was not in thee, but themselves; not in thy truth, but in their own love of falsehood. Could the devil allege any thing against God or man, which might oblige God to alter his measures, and deal with him as a fair and open enemy? No, it was just that he who had contrived to put so holy and innocent a person to an unjust death, should lose that power which he had before, of bringing the guilty to the death they justly deserved.

It is certain there was nothing due to the devil

from God but punishment, nor from man but resistance and conquest. So that, as man had suffered himself to be conquered by this enemy before, when he was seduced into sin; he might afterwards conquer him in return, by the human nature persevering in unblemished righteousness even unto death. And this too was a debt which man owed to no other but God: for in sinning he did not offend against the devil, but against God; nor was he of right a subject of the devil's, but both he and the devil were subjects of God, and under his dominion. The mischiefs and temptations by which man's destruction was attempted, did not proceed from any zeal for goodness, but purely from wickedness and malice: God did not command, but only permit those attempts upon his creatures: nor was this permission upon any other consideration, than because the justice of God required it. So that God was under no obligations, but perfectly free to chuse his own methods and his own time, and to save mankind when and how he pleaseth.

CHAP. III.

BUT was there any necessity that the Most High should humble himself so low, and that Omnipotence, which can do every thing at ease, should be at so much pains to compass any of its designs? No, every thing that we call necessary or impossible, is entirely at the free disposal of the Divine will. Whatever he decrees must of necessity be; and what he will not have done, cannot possibly be. All we can say then in the point is only this, that it was his will it should be so. And because he always wills that which is good, we may safely infer, that it was fit

it should be so. God was not driven to this way of working out the salvation of mankind, but the condition of human nature made it necessary, that so satisfaction might be made to the justice of God. God did not stand in need of such bitter sufferings, but man needed them in order to his reconciliation with an offended God. God was not profited by this condescension, but man by it received the benefit of a deliverance from the lowest pit of hell. The Divine nature could not be compelled to be abased or to suffer, nor could it in truth do either ; but it was necessary that the human nature should do both, that it might be restored to, and made capable of, the condition for which it was at first created. And for the compassing this restitution, neither the human nature of itself, nor indeed any thing less than God, was sufficient. For man is no otherwise to be restored to the perfection and happiness of his primitive state, but by being exalted to a likeness of the angels, those blessed spirits, in whom there is no sin.

Now this can be done but one way, and that is by having his sins perfectly remitted : and that remission could not be obtained upon any other terms than a plenary satisfaction. But how should such satisfaction ever be made, except the sinner in his own person, or some other for him, give to God somewhat freely of his own, which was not due by way of debt, and which should in value exceed every thing inferior to God himself? For, if God be dishonoured and injured by every sin, and man ought not for that reason to be guilty of sin, no not to save the whole creation from perishing; reason and the eternal rules of equity require, that the sinner should make God amends for the injury done to his honour, by restoring in lieu of it somewhat greater and more valuable, than all that can be, which is not a suffi-

cient compensation for dishonouring him. Since then the human nature alone could not be in possession of any thing so valuable, and since, when corrupted by sin, (according to the scheme God had laid for his justice to proceed upon) it could not be reconciled without an equivalent satisfaction, it follows that neither could man, nor any thing less than God, work out this reconciliation.

To prevent therefore that usurpation which sin had made in his dominions, and the desolation which must have followed if it had reigned without control, or been left wholly to his justice; the goodness of God was pleased to interpose, and the Son of God took our nature into his own person. By this means, being God and man both in the same person, he was provided with a satisfaction, exceeding not only every thing which is not God, but the largest debt that sinners could possibly contract. And this is he who owed nothing for himself, vouchsafed to pay down for others, who had not wherewithal to pay what they owed. For the life of that man was of infinitely greater worth than all the creation put together; and far above the sum which sinners were indebted to God for by way of satisfaction.

This life that man (who because no sinner, was not indebted to the law, nor liable to the death) gave voluntarily and of his own, by way of reparation to his Father's honour, when he suffered it to be taken from him for righteousness sake. And in so doing, left all other men a pattern that they should not, for any terrors of death, which they owe and must certainly pay, at one time or other, forsake their duty to God, or renounce his righteousness and truth; when they see him, who owed no such debt, and might without any breach of duty have declined dying, yet freely submit to a death inflicted upon him for righteousness sake. The human nature then did, in

this person, give to God somewhat purely its own, and not due to him as a debt; that thus the same nature might be ransomed in others, who are vastly indebted, and had not wherewithal to satisfy the demands of Divine justice. In all which proceedings the Divine nature was not debased, but the human was exalted; nor was the former at all impaired, but the latter wonderfully profited, and most mercifully relieved.

CHAP. IV.

NOR must we so mistake in this matter, as to suppose that in the man Christ Jesus, even his human nature endured any thing out of necessity and compulsion, but all his sufferings were in this capacity too, his own free choice. For this it was that recommended his sufferings, and rendered them so meritorious, so full of mercy and goodness, that he did of his own accord deliver up himself for the honour of God, and the benefit of other men, to that death, which his enemies out of quite other designs, and in mere malice, contrived. Nor was he bound so to do by any obedience, which had made it unlawful for him to refuse dying, but disposed to it by his own wisdom, which foresaw the excellent effects of condescending to it: for the Father did not compel him by any authoritative act of his, but he readily offered himself to do that, which he knew would be well pleasing to his Father, and infinitely beneficial to the whole world. It may be said perhaps, without irreverence, that the Father could not force him to an instance of submission, which he did not owe; and the Father could not but be exceedingly pleased with so great an honour done him by his Son with so very good a will. This was indeed an act of obedience, but

it was of free obedience ; because, without any obligation, and of his own accord, he did that which he knew would be most acceptable to his Father. But then, in regard this very will of doing it, though it acted freely, was given him by his Father, it may upon that account be reasonably said, that he received it as a command from his Father to do what he did. And thus we are led to understand those passages of scripture. *He became obedient unto death. As my Father hath given me commandment, so I do. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?* (Phil. ii. 8 ; John xiv. 31 ; xviii. 11.) With several others of the like importance.

For this perfect obedience, and the most free of any that human nature is capable of, when the will of man, which is free in itself, does readily and willingly conform to the will of God ; and do that which it knows acceptable to him, of its own accord, and though it be not positively and particularly required. And thus did this man redeem all others, because what he freely gave to God was reckoned and graciously accepted for the debt they owed. And this price is so sufficient, as not only to redeem man from the punishment of his sins for once and no more, but to procure him favour and pardon, as oft as ever he shall return to his duty by sincere repentance. But then repentance must be our work ; for he who hath promised to pardon us if we repent, hath not promised that we shall repent. Now in regard this ransom was paid in the crucifixion of Christ, from hence he is said to have redeemed us by his cross. But still the benefits of this redemption are, as I said, conditional : for they, who with due gratitude and reverence accept this grace, and the terms upon which it is suspended, are saved by it ; but those who despise and reject it, are justly left to condemnation, because they neither pay what

they owe in their own persons, nor qualify themselves for a release by virtue of that payment which another hath made for them.

CHAP. V.

SEE, faithful Christian, see here the power of thy salvation, the cause of thy liberty, the price paid for thy ransom. Thou wert a captive, but by this merciful dispensation thou art now redeemed. Thou wert a servant, but art thus set at liberty ; banished and brought back to thy native country, lost and art found, dead and art alive again. Let every Christian feed upon, and digest, and nourish himself with this, when his mouth receives the mystical representations of that dear Redeemer's body and blood. Not only then, but let this be thy daily bread, thy meals and constant sustenance : for, by attending to this great work of thy salvation, and by that only, wilt thou abide in Christ, and Christ in thee ; and the sweet foretastes of thy joy here, shall advance into the fulness of it hereafter.

But, O my dearest Lord, who wert content to die, that I might live, how shall I rejoice in my own liberty, when the thought of that is necessarily attended with a reflection upon thy bonds ? What pleasure can I take in my own ease and safety, when checked with a remembrance of thy agonies and pains ? Or how shall I be transported with receiving a life, which was purchased at no less an expense than thy death ? Can I triumph in thy sufferings, or be pleased with the cruelty of those hardened brutish creatures, that used thee so barbarously ? And yet, had they relented, thou hadst not endured such bitter things ; and hadst not thou endured such bitter things, I could not have attained to these advantages. And

if I grieve for thy sufferings how shall I prevent this grief from embittering my joy from those benefits, for the procuring whereof thou wert well pleased to suffer; and which never could have been had upon easier terms? And yet thy enemies malice, it is sure, would not have prevailed against thee but by thy own permission, nor hadst thou suffered, if thy kindness and compassion had not made thee choose it. These things then laid together, my duty plainly is to detest the wickedness and barbarity of them who put my Lord to death; to imitate his suffering and death, by suffering and being crucified with him; to be truly thankful for this wonderful compassion, to love my Jesus most affectionately in return for all his goodness; and, when my soul is thus disposed, then am I duly qualified to rejoice in, and securely depend upon, the mighty benefits God hath done unto me.

CHAP. VI.

WHEN therefore thou settest thyself to reflect upon the death of thy Redeemer, do not allow thy thoughts to wander in dark and unprofitable speculations, but keep them close to that wherein thou art properly concerned. Leave the wickedness and cruelty of his enemies to the just judgment of God; and employ thy mind in computing how vastly thou art indebted to so kind a Saviour. Get a due sense of thy own once lost condition, and what hath been done to redress thy misery, and then consider well, what requital is due to him, who hath done so much for thee. Let a sight of thy own necessities, and his goodness in providing so effectual a relief for them, convince thee thoroughly, how deeply thou art obliged by his love, and put thee upon finding

out some proper way of expressing thy thanks for it.

Thou satest forlorn in thick darkness, thy feet were upon slippery ground, upon the very brink of ruin; but why do I say upon the brink of it, when in effect thou wert already sunk into that bottomless pit, out of which thou couldest never have risen more? A millstone, as it were, hanging about thy neck, dragged thee to the bottom, an insupportable weight pressed and kept thee down, and multitudes of invisible enemies were continually laying at thee to complete thy destruction. This was thy miserable state, destitute of all help, and yet thou didst not see nor know thy misery, because conceived and born in it. O what a lamentable condition was this, and how dismal must it have been to thee in the end? Thou canst not sure, it is not fit thou shouldest, look back upon it without horror; every mention, every remembrance of it must be attended with trembling and amazement.

And yet, O blessed Jesus, O compassionate Saviour, when I was in these wretched circumstances, thou didst break in upon me, like the sun through a thick cloud, thou didst discover my misery to me, and shed thy refreshing beams upon my head, to bring me out of darkness into thy marvellous light, without my asking, without so much as my expecting, or thinking of so happy a change. Thou didst cut off, and cast away that millstone that dragged me into the pit: thou didst take off the weight that lay over me; thou didst scatter those enemies that bore down so hard upon me, and expose thyself to their force and malice in my defence and stead.

Thou hadst called me by a new name, a title of distinction and great significance, a name derived from thy own; and, when I was bent and bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, didst make me

and take better courses, and at last attain to thy gracious promises.

CHAP. VII.

LAY this seriously to heart, my soul, and all that is within me, observe how much the whole of what I am is indebted to so merciful a Saviour. It is most evident, O Lord, that I owe myself entirely to thee, because I am thine by creation; I owe myself entirely to thee, because I am thine by redemption; I owe myself again entirely to thee, because my being and all the hopes and comforts of it depend upon thy large precious promises, which should I fail to attain, infinitely better were it for me never to have been at all: nay, I owe to such wonderful love as much more than myself as thou art greater and better than me; than me, for whom notwithstanding thou hast given thyself, and to whom thou hast promised thyself. Grant me, I beseech thee, good Lord, the grace and happiness to taste the sweetness of thy mercy by love, which I taste already by knowledge; let me feel that which as yet I understand and believe only. I owe thee, it is true, more than myself; but I am not able to pay thee any more than myself; and what I have I cannot pay thee of myself. Assist me therefore with thy grace, draw me that I may run after thee, fasten me with the cords of thy love; and, as I am already upon so many accounts thy own, so make me thy own also by inclinations and affection.

Behold, O Lord, my heart, and all its desires are before thee; thou seest what endeavours it makes, but withal, how feeble and ineffectual all its strugglings are, when left to his own impotence.

rise, or bear up under it. The devils, those adversaries of souls, assaulted me continually with their temptations, and did their utmost to make my condemnation still more sure and insupportable, by urging me to add sin to sin. And yet in this destitute condition, when there was neither help nor hope, the Sun of Righteousness was pleased to shine upon me, and discover me to myself. Nay, even then, when I was not in a capacity of knowing my wretched circumstances, thou madest, first others for me, and by degrees myself sensible of them ; and herein didst prevent my own desire. The mill-stone hung about my neck, and the weight that pressed me down thou didst remove, and beat off the enemies that laboured my destruction, by obstructing the evil consequences of that sin in which I was conceived and born, remitting the guilt of it, guarding my soul against actual transgressions, and repelling the violence of them that sought my life. Thou hast made me a Christian, and called me after thy own name ; a name, by which I profess myself, and thou acknowledgest me for thy own, one of the redeemed of the Lord ; and, from forbidden objects, and sensual desires, thou hast exalted my heart to the knowledge and love of thee and thy truth. Thou hast inspired me with a comfortable and holy hope, that this soul of mine shall not perish, for which thou hast condescended to pour out thy own soul unto death, thou hast promised me a portion and inheritance in thy glory, provided I sincerely follow and obey thee : and, though I have not done this as I ought, but walked unworthy of my profession, and been guilty of many and grievous offences against thee, contrary to thy express commands, and the dictates of my own conscience ; yet still thou forbearst to execute vengeance, that I may bethink myself,

and take better courses, and at last attain to thy gracious promises.

CHAP. VII.

LAY this seriously to heart, my soul, and all that is within me, observe how much the whole of what I am is indebted to so merciful a Saviour. It is most evident, O Lord, that I owe myself entirely to thee, because I am thine by creation; I owe myself entirely to thee, because I am thine by redemption; I owe myself again entirely to thee, because my being and all the hopes and comforts of it depend upon thy large precious promises, which should I fail to attain, infinitely better were it for me never to have been at all: nay, I owe to such wonderful love as much more than myself as thou art greater and better than me; than me, for whom notwithstanding thou hast given thyself, and to whom thou hast promised thyself. Grant me, I beseech thee, good Lord, the grace and happiness to taste the sweetness of thy mercy by love, which I taste already by knowledge; let me feel that which as yet I understand and believe only. I owe thee, it is true, more than myself; but I am not able to pay thee any more than myself; and what I have I cannot pay thee of myself. Assist me therefore with thy grace, draw me that I may run after thee, fasten me with the cords of thy love; and, as I am already upon so many accounts thy own, so make me thy own also by inclinations and affection.

Behold, O Lord, my heart, and all its desires are before thee; thou seest what endeavours it makes, but withal, how feeble and ineffectual all its strugglings are, when left to his own impotence.

Do thou therefore do that for me, which I am not in a condition to do for myself. Admit me into the secrets of thy love. *I ask, I seek, I knock.* Thou that disposest me to *ask*, grant my requests; thou that enablest me to *seek*, let me *find*; thou that commandest and teachest me to knock, *open* to my importunity. Whom wilt thou give unto, if he that *asked* be denied? Who can expect to *find*, if he that *seeks* be disappointed? To whom will the *door be opened*, if it continue shut against them that *knock*? What wilt thou grant to them that pray not at all, if thou refuse them that pray most earnestly? The very desire of obtaining is thy gift; O let me obtain the thing which thou hast made me to desire: preserve then, my soul, and hold thy Lord fast, and let him not go, till thy importunity prevail upon him to bless thee. O gracious God, O dearest, kindest Saviour, cast not out my soul. It faints with hunger, and languishes with desire, do thou sustain and refresh it; let thy love satisfy, and fatten, and fill it; let this diffuse itself throughout the whole frame, and take and keep possession of every part of me: that I may be entirely thine now, and thou entirely mine hereafter; who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest one only God blessed for evermore. *Amen.*

ST. ANSELM

*Of the Misery of Man, in the Person of a sorrowful
Sinner deploring his own Condition.*

BOOK VI.

I CANNOT look upon my past life without horror : for, when nicely examined, it shews me nothing but sin or barrenness, and all my days hitherto seem to have been consumed, in living viciously, or living to no purpose. Or if in the midst of this general corruption there be scattered some few instances of profitable actions, yet even these give me confusion too : for how beautiful and commendable soever they may appear outwardly, yet upon a closer view, I can easily discover so much laboured hypocrisy, so great an allay of imperfection, and so many other blemishes of several kinds, as will not suffer me to think they can please and deserve to be approved, but incline me rather to dread their displeasing, and being rejected by a holy and all-seeing God.

And is this the best account that sinful man can give of himself, that all his actions have been either vicious and damnable ; or at least fruitless and vain, but so despicable and of no effect ? But why do I make this distinction between a vain and unprofitable, and a damnable course of life ? For surely if a man's conversation be the one, it

is as certainly the other too. So truth itself hath declared, that not only evil fruit, but no fruit at all; not only the corrupt, but barren tree, shall be condemned to everlasting flames; for such is the importance of that saying, *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.* (Matth. vii. 19.)

Again, if I do any thing that is useful, yet of what value and consequence is it, or what proportion does it bear to the worth, even of that bodily sustenance, and those outward comforts, that I continually subsist upon, and frequently abuse? And what master is so imprudently profuse, to keep those beasts, whose service does not answer the expense of their feeding? Yet so indulgent is my Lord and master: for thou, O merciful God, extendest thy compassion and bounty to me, bearest with thy unprofitable servant, and dost not only wait till he may make a happy change, and become useful; but wilt not cast him out, though his sins have rendered him even odious and loathsome in thy sight. For the stench of no carcase is more offensive to men, than a soul dead and putrified with sins, is to Almighty God.

O wretched man that I am! But why do I arrogate to myself that name, who am no longer a man, but the scorn and scandal of my *species*: more vile than the beasts that perish, more filthy and noisome, than a carcase already perished? My soul is perplexed and overwhelmed with trouble. Life is grown a burden to me: I am ashamed to go on in it; I am horribly afraid to go out of it. And till the time comes that I must do so, the only thing that seems left for me to do, is to bestow the whole of it in lamenting the whole of it: that so, as every day adds to my guilt and misery, every day may likewise be



employed in bewailing the sins and miseries of itself, and of every other day.

Now, though in reason thus I ought to do, yet this most prodigious, most deplorable circumstance, is an aggravation to all my other miseries, that I cannot work up my soul to a degree of sorrow, suitable to the knowledge she has of her own wretchedness; but, in the midst of dangers and diseases, stupidity hath seized her, and a profound security; as if she either had no sufferings to bewail, or at least had no sense of any. But, O barren and unprofitable creature, what sloth, what dead sleep is this, that locks up all thy powers? Behold! the day of judgment approacheth, the great day of the Lord is nigh at hand, it flies swiftly toward thee, and will surely overtake thee, even the *day of vengeance and fierce anger, a day of tribulation and distress, and a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness; a day of the trumpet and alarm.* (Zeph. i. 14, 15, 16.) O! how bitter is the sound; how terrible is the surprise of this day of the Lord! Up then, why sleepest thou, O lukewarm and nauseous creature! Awake, and shake off thy slumber, for surely he who is not roused, who does not tremble at the loud thunder of these threatenings, can sleep no other sleep but that of death. Examine thyself, unprofitable tree, and produce thy fruits. Where, where, thou withered ungracious stock, fit for the axe and the fire, ready to be hewn down, and burnt to ashes; where is thy growth, and what canst thou shew for cumbering the ground so long, what canst thou plead in bar, why the sentence of utter destruction should not at last take place upon thee? Nothing hath all this while sprung out of thee, but sharp thorns and bitter sins. And O that

those thorns would so prick thy heart, as to produce compunction and repentance; O that those sins were so bitter to thee in the remembrance, that thou mayest ever nauseate, and never commit them any more!

And what can be the reason why every one of them should not be bitter to thee? Perhaps thou thinkest some sins so small, as not to be worth thy concern: well were it for thee, if the righteous and all-seeing Judge would proceed with thee at the last day by the same measures. But be assured, how secure soever thy conscience may be, when deluded by these false estimations, yet he, whose judgment must conclude us to all eternity, accounts no sin small, that affronts his Majesty, by dealing treacherously with him, and acting in despite of his laws. And what offence then can the wretched sinner find, which he can have the confidence to think or call a little one? Can it ever be a small thing to dishonour God, and contemn his authority? O no! deceitful extenuations of thy guilt will avail nothing. It is manifest how dry and sapless, how barren and unserviceable a trunk thou art; and consequently, how far from being in any condition of answering for thyself in that day, when God shall call thee to a strict account for the time, for every talent bestowed upon thee, and expect some improvement, or reckon with thee for the misemployment of them all.

Whatever shall upon this balance be then found upon thee of sin and vanity, whether in thy actions, or thy words, nay, or even in thy silent and most secret thoughts, all that shall be condemned: and every day and hour laid to thy charge, which was not directed to the service and obedience of thy God, who entrusted thee with them. But, oh! the dismal sight, the unconceivable numbers of unremembered, unknown, unsuspected sins, that shall rush out upon thee like enemies from an

ambush, which thou wert not the least aware of! Many, too many, alas! and too formidable are those thou seest already; but many more to be sure there are, and perhaps such too as are more terrible and confounding, which hitherto have escaped thy observation. Some things, that thou dost not think to have any hurt at all in them; nay, others that thou mistakest for commendable and good, shall then appear of a quite different complexion, and scare thee with a guilt as black as hell. Then is the time of receiving according to what thou hast done in thy body; then shall the season of forbearance expire; and mercy, so greatly abused, so long extended in vain, shall give place to justice, and speedy execution of vengeance. Think then here, while that thought may do thee good, what recompense thou art like to receive at that day. If upon inquiry, thou find thy good actions many, and thy bad ones few, rejoice and be thankful for the riches of Divine grace, which hath made thee an instrument of thy Master's honour, and thy own salvation. But if thou find, as find I fear thou wilt, that thy transgressions have been vastly great and many, and thy virtues but very few, let thy lamentations and sighs be likewise many, and thy sorrow for sin proportionably great. Are not these considerations sufficient to make thy very heart-strings crack, and even to dissolve thy whole mass of blood into tears of repentance? How prodigiously hard is the flint of that heart, which such hammers are not able to break? How stupid and lost to all sense, which these sharp goads cannot pierce? How fatally profound that sleep which these loud claps of thunder cannot drive away? These melancholy reflections should have power enough, not only to open a passage for thy tears, but to keep them perpetually flowing, and make them thine, as they were once the prophet's *meat and drink day and night*. (Psal. xlii. 3.)


Great reason certainly there is, why thou shouldest make them so. For what can it profit thee to dissemble the matter, by either wholly concealing, or craftily extenuating the greatness and weight of that misery, which like a heavy load lies upon thy conscience ; and, if not seen and early prevented, will surely break upon thee in endless and irretrievable destruction? Will the surprise of thy sufferings be any abatement? Will not that be the most dreadful aggravation indeed, and render thy anguish so much the more insupportable? It never can be adviseable for a sinner to shut his eyes, and plunge himself blindfold into that ruin, which a timely foresight of might have delivered him from. Men ought not to be flattered in this case, nor think their unhappy circumstances exaggerated by the most frightful representations that can be given of them. For be assured, that experience will convince thee, when it is too late, how far it is past the power of words to express, or come near to the deplorable miseries, that shall one day overtake the hardened and impenitent. Lest this then should be thy own case, open thine eyes, my soul, and let them overflow with tears of godly sorrow. Force thyself to see and hear the danger of thy condition. Make thy anguish yet more cutting, be yet more afraid, tremble at the apprehensions of an angry God, and howl over the calamities, which thou hast brought upon thyself. Consider, not only that thou shalt be judged, but who it is that must judge thee. Even He, who hath declared himself jealous of his honour, and whose majesty is dared and affronted by every wilful violation of his law ; even He, who hath recompensed thee good for evil, but to whom thou in return hast paid neglect and hatred, for his unwearied kindness and bounty ; even He, who is now full of patience and forbearance, merciful and gracious, but who shall then

be a strict examiner of all thy actions, and a just avenger of all thy insolence and base ingratitude.

O wretched man ! whom have I sinned against ? I have dishonoured the great God, I have provoked and armed against myself the vengeance of the Almighty. O what have I done ! to whom have I done it ! how great was my folly, and how unpardonable my fault ! Unpardonable, if considered in itself ; but, O my God, let not thy indignation and fury of thy almighty hand be poured out upon me ! Who can sustain the wrath of an omnipotent Being ? Who can stand against thy thunder : These very distant prospects of it amaze and utterly confound me. But, oh ! how unconceivable, how intolerable will be the perplexities and horrors of that dismal day : when on the one hand I shall see sins innumerable accusing me ; on the other justice inexorable dismaying me ; beneath, a lake of liquid and eternal fire gaping to receive me ; above, an incensed Judge ready to pronounce an irreversible sentence upon me ; within, a guilty conscience reproaching me ; without, a world in flames, kindled by the breath of an angry God. Then shall the *righteous scarcely be saved ; but, where ?* ah ! where *shall the ungodly and the sinner, already self-condemned, appear ?* (1 Pet. iv. 18.) Where, where indeed shall I appear ? Or where shall I hide myself, and escape from that appearance ? The latter is impossible, the former insupportable. This judgment I should wish above all things to decline, but there is no shelter from it to be found ; to be brought to it I should dread and detest ; but if I betake myself to flight, the eyes of God will soon discover me, and his vengeance and my sins pursue me every where.

In this deplorable extremity what will become of me ? Who can deliver me out of the hands of this God ? What measures can I take, or who will

be my defence? Is there not one, who is called *the Angel of the covenant?* (Mal. iii. 1.) the Saviour, and mighty deliverer? Upon his name I will call aloud; Jesus, the blessed Jesus. This, this is He, the Judge at whom I tremble, but the Saviour in whom I trust to. Look up then, sinner, and be comforted; look up, and sink not in despair: let this character revive thee, and allay thy fears with a cordial mixture of hopes; since the same person is the proper object both of thy hopes and fears. Flee to him in one capacity, whom thou wouldest wish to flee from in another. Pour out thy heart before him, for he is thy hope; and cry aloud, persevere in prayer, and let thy humble supplications take no denial; as thy proud contempts and provocations of him have known no measure. O Jesus, Jesus, by this most blessed name I beg, that thou wouldest deal with me according to the importance of this name. For this is a name full of love, full of delight, full of comfort and holy confidence to every sinner, that takes sanctuary in it. For what does Jesus signify but a Saviour? and why didst thou take that name upon thee but to declare that thou wouldest make it good to the uttermost, by saving thy people from their sins? For thy own sake I implore thee to be my Jesus indeed: thou hast created me, destroy not then the work of thine own hands. Thou hast redeemed me, do not cast away the purchase of thy own precious blood. Let thy goodness, I beseech thee, triumph over my wickedness, and whom the former gave a being to, suffer not the latter so to prevail upon, that it should have been better for me never to have been at all. My iniquities, I confess, are many and grievous, yet do they admit both of number and measure; thy goodness and thy power know no bounds; and therefore I beseech thee, by all the past demonstrations of thy love and condescension, as



thy majesty is in itself, so let thy mercy be to me, infinite. Remember, Lord, that I am thine, lose not thy own property: see what is in me that belongs to thee, and graciously accept it: see what there is derived from any other hand, and purge it quite away, that I may be wholly thine. Mercy, sweet Jesus, mercy, before the season of mercy be past: bring me not into judgment to be glorified in my condemnation, for *what profit is there in my blood, if I be thrust into the pit of everlasting destruction? The dead praise not thee, O Lord, neither all they that go down into hell.* (Psal. xxx. 9; cxv. 17.) If thou enlarge the bowels of thy mercy, they will not be one whit the more straitened to others, for taking in this trembling penitent. Admit me, therefore, O thou desire of my soul, receive this wandering lost sheep into thy bosom; and *make me to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting.* So shall I join with them in concerts of praise: so shall I enjoy thee, delight in thee, and make my boast of thy mercy, with those that love thy name. Even thine, O dearest, kindest Saviour; who, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, art worshipped and glorified, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

ST. ANSELM'S
INCENTIVE TO HOLY LOVE;
OR,
MEDITATIONS UPON THE PASSION OF
OUR LORD.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

*The Benefit of observing and reverencing our Lord
in his State of Humiliation.*

COME, and let us pay Divine honours to Jesus of Nazareth; nor let it abate of our devotion, that the Jews condemned, and that the gentiles crucified him, since we, who are Christians, know assuredly, that his innocence was unblemished, his persecution most injurious, and his sufferings in no degree deserved by him. We, therefore, who not only call ourselves, but really are, the servants of Christ, must think that character obliges us to look with reverence and attention upon his lowest condescensions, to embrace even our despised and afflicted Master with the tenderest affection; and esteem it our

duty, our advantage, nay, our honour, to tread in his steps, constantly endure whatever God shall lay upon us, in order to conforming us to the image of that Son, whom he hath made our pattern. For his sufferings are the powerful instruments which almighty Power and unsearchable Wisdom thought fit to use, for accomplishing the noblest design of Providence. And how can we sufficiently admire the mighty, the miraculous efficacy, which did, and still continues to exert itself, in the restitution of a lost world, by means, in appearance so weak, in their own nature so exceeding unsuitable to the end accomplished by them? But what a commanding influence ought this mysterious work to have upon our hearts, our dispositions, and our manners, and how strongly should it draw our affections and practice, to imitate those graces so conspicuous in the person of our Redeemer? The Lord Christ was made lower than the angels, who is by nature their Creator and King: and all for our sakes, that we, who are by nature below those angels, might in dignity and happiness be exalted to an equality with them. And can any of us think much to humble himself at the command and for the service of a Master, who stooped so low for our advancement? The Lord Christ submitted to be crucified for our sins, and, by the bitter things he underwent, hath sweetened all the sufferings and sorrows that can possibly fall upon them that love him. He died, and by his own death destroyed the power of death, that we might live through him; and who, that considers this, can forbear loving so gracious, so great a Master, as Christ the Lord? Who would decline suffering, or grudge any degree of it, for his sake, especially, if it be remembered, that for all who suffer with and for him, is reserved a recompense like that attained by himself? And Christ, we

know, made the pain and ignominy of the cross upon earth a passage to the bliss and glory of his throne in heaven. The voluntary submission and constant duty paid to God the Father by him was rewarded with *all power in heaven and in earth*. *He who was once despised and rejected of men, is now adored by angels: And a name is given unto him above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.* (Matt. xxviii. 18; Isa. liii. 3; Heb. i. 6; Phil. ii. 9, 10.)

CHAP. II.

A Christian's Boast should be in a crucified Saviour.

LET then the carnal and the worldly minds make their boast of such imaginary advantages, as are agreeable to sensual dispositions; but for thee, who art a Christian, God forbid, that thou, like them, should think the cross of Christ a thing to be ashamed of, that thou shouldst not glory in it, nay, that thou shouldest imagine any thing besides can be matter of just glory and advantage to thee, but only the name of thy crucified Lord, Christ Jesus. Make thou thy boast then in that name, which is above every name, in which whosoever is blessed upon earth, shall be blessed also in heaven. Let *them give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed* (Psa. cvii. 2.); yea, let them ever praise his holy name. O come and let us ascribe due honour to our Saviour, who hath done so great things for us, great things, whereof we do and ought to rejoice. Lift up your hearts and join your voices, ye children of grace and redemption, and let us magnify his name together, saying, *We praise thee, we bless*

thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee, for thy great glory, O Christ, the King of Israel, the Light of the gentiles, the Prince of all the kings of the earth, the Lord of hosts, the power of God Almighty in its utmost strength and perfection. We worship thee, O precious and invaluable ransom of our souls! O, our peace, and most acceptable sacrifice! who, by the sweet-smelling savour of thy sin-offering, didst incline the Father, whose dwelling is on high, to cast an eye of pity upon the vilest of his creatures here below, and didst open a way to reconciliation for the sons of wrath and perdition. We publish the praise of thy mercy, O blessed Jesus, and out of the abundance of our hearts do gratefully recount the sweetness of thy love; we offer unto thee our daily sacrifice of gratitude and glory, for the incomprehensible excellence of thy goodness, and the bowels of that tender and unbounded compassion, which thou hast been pleased to extend to a most reprobate and ungracious seed, a race of miserable wretches, sunk in sin, and justly sentenced to destruction.

CHAP. III.

The Greatness of God's Mercy to Mankind.

FOR, while we were yet enemies to thee, O Lord, and rebels to thy righteous government; while death maintained its ancient usurpation, and exercised a most unjust and merciless tyranny over us (to which, by the breach of our first parents' covenant, all the posterity of Adam, as virtually included and sinning in him, had been enslaved); even in this miserable state, which had nothing to merit or incline thy favour, didst thou remember mercy; and, from thy dwelling, upon thy holy hill in the highest heavens, look

down with plenteous compassion, and most amazing goodness, upon this valley of misery and tears. Thou sawest, O Lord, the affliction of thy people; and wert so affected with the dismal object, that thy bowels sounded, and the immensity of thy love yearned towards us: and, from the instant in which our sin and misery commenced, thou didst apply thy heart to thoughts of peace, and kindness, and redemption for us. Then didst thou lay that most stupendous scheme, which angels and men, with holy astonishment, continually desire to look into. And, though the Son of God, thyself very God, of the same substance and eternity with God the Father and Holy Ghost, *dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, and upholding all things by the word of thy power*: (1 Tim. vi. 16; Heb. i. 3.) yet didst thou not disdain to be confined in the prison of a mortal body, to stoop down from the height of majesty, and, becoming one of us, not only to taste, but even to drink up the very dregs of our bitter cup; that the depth of thy misery might exalt us to thy glory.

The exceeding greatness of thy love would not content itself with committing the work of our salvation to any of the cherubim or seraphim: nor wouldest thou send the most glorious of the angels upon this embassy of peace and joy; but didst vouchsafe to come in person, and finish with thy own hands the work which the Father gave thee to do: and as in thy acceptance, so in that delegation, the love of God to mankind appeared incomprehensibly great; and never was the Father's tenderness so visible, as when reflected on us in the person of his Son. But as the motive, so the manner of thy coming was extraordinary. For this coming was not any change of place, so as to render thee absent or present where thou wert not so before; but it was only a manifesta-

tion of thyself to the world, and rendering us sensible of that presence in our flesh, which was not an object of our senses before. Thou didst descend from the royal throne of the Majesty on high, into the womb of a virgin, pure and meek, and lowly in her own thought, precious in thy eyes. In whose holy body the mysterious and inexplicable power of the Holy Spirit, without the operation of any other agent, caused thee to be conceived and born in the real substance of human nature. And that in so stupendous a manner, as at once to preserve the majesty of the Divine nature from any indignity, and the chastity of thy virgin-mother from any violation; by this unexampled method of bringing a man into the world.

CHAP. IV.

*Of the Miseries which God took upon him
for Mankind.*

O MOST engaging, O most astonishing condescension! The God of infinite glory did not refuse to become a despicable worm: the Lord of all the world was pleased to put on the form of a servant, and stoop to the condition of the meanest of his own servants. Was it not honour, was it not privilege sufficient for us, that thou shouldst be our Father, and most gracious Master, but wouldest thou permit thyself to be made our brother and our fellow-servant? Nay, that thou, who possesseth all things, and couldst not want any thing, shouldst at the drawing thy first breath, vouchsafe to taste all the inconveniences of poverty and contempt? Hadst thou made thy entrance into thy own world with all the pomp and state of earthly princes, yet even thus the condescension had

been amazing; but the Scripture acquaints us, that when thou wert born there was *no room for thee in the inn*: (Luke ii. 7.) no bed or cradle of state to receive this infant King, and repose his tender body in, but a manger and a stable only. See then, and wonder, Christian; see thy Lord's unspeakable humility; see this strange thing which came to pass at *Bethlehem*. See him, who hides the earth in the hollow of his hand, wrapped up in swaddling clothes, and borrowing even from brute beasts a room to lay his new-born body in. Observe this, you that are reduced to homely cottages, and have been brought up in all the straits of a mean fortune; take comfort even from your want, when you behold your God, submitting to all these hardships, which are so apt to provoke your complaints and discontent: your God, I say, choosing to be made like one of you, taking a part in all your poverty, and preferring a hard and coarse bed before the pomps and delicacies of a palace, or the conveniences of them who live in luxury and ease. See this, you rich and proud, that value yourselves upon sumptuous dwellings and gay furniture; learn what an estimate you ought to make of painted roofs, and curious hangings, when the King of kings despised these vanities, and rather chose to grace the mattresses and straw of the poor, by making such his lodging? How can you, with such a haughty disdain, abhor the meanest provisions of this kind, when that young Prince, who had all things in his power, preferred a truss of straw, and a cratch in common with beasts, before your down, and all your silks and velvets?

But neither was this the only mark, that thou, my Jesus, camest into the world on purpose to suffer hardship: for the malice of men was immediately awaked, and armed itself against thee. Thy life set out in persecution, and was

no sooner given, than endeavoured to be taken away. The treacherous respects of a jealous tyrant laid snares for this supposed rival of his crown; and while thou wert yet hanging at thy mother's breast, the sword of *Herod* was escaped by flight into a strange country; for lo, *an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.* (Matt. ii. 13.) So soon didst thou commence a suffering Redeemer, so soon a sufferer; not in thy person only, but in the members of thy mystical body too. For we are not to suppose that the troubles brought upon thy infancy, terminated in thee alone: no, thou wert persecuted in all these innocent babes, so many thousands of whom were barbarously torn from the arms of their mothers, and upon thy account butchered by the sword of that inhuman monster, *Herod*.

CHAP. V.

The Behaviour of Christ from his Youth.

WHEN this first state of life was ran, thy tender years began with setting us early, but admirable examples of humility and virtue: for then thou didst not, like the giddy and head strong despisers of discipline, stand in the *counsel of the wicked, or sit in the seat of the scornful*, (Ps. i. 1.) but wert found in the temple at twelve years old, sitting in the *midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions.* (Luke ii. 46.) Not for thy better information sure, for thou art the source of all knowledge, and the very wisdom of God the Father, and couldst not be taught by them whom thou hadst made.

Another instance of thy condescension was that pattern of obedience, which thou wert pleased to set us, by living in subjection to thy parents, though the whole world at the same time was subject to thee. Thus didst thou pass thy first and tender years in daily repeated instances of humility and meekness, and the strictest observance to those, who, after the flesh, were esteemed thy superiors; and wouldst not suffer any of thy Divine prerogatives to exempt thee from any of the offices due to the relations contracted by the assumption of the human nature.

At length, when advanced to strength and maturity, the time approaching which was appointed for combating the enemies of our salvation, thou didst prepare thyself for hardy exploits, and wentest out into the field, as a giant ready to run the whole course of our misery. And since it was expedient for thee in all things to be made like unto thy brethren, to shew that thou wert even then content to *be numbered among the transgressors*, thou didst address thyself to that servant, whom thou hadst sent before thee to prepare thy way by the baptism of repentance; as if thou hadst stood in need of the same dispensation with common sinners: and offeredst thy person to this spiritual washing, though thou wert that white and spotless Lamb of God, whose innocence no touch of sin had ever stained. (Matt. iii. 13.) Thus wert thou actually baptized, not with any intent to be sanctified by, but to sanctify the waters; and to convey to them a power of cleansing us afterwards, when we should have recourse to the same methods, and come duly qualified for thy mystical purging away of sins.

Immediately after thy baptism, the same Spirit of power and undaunted resolution led thee up into the wilderness: (Matt. iv. 1.) that solitude and retirement from the world might not want the

advantage of such an example to recommend it, when chosen with prudent deliberation, and for holy and useful purposes. There didst thou with a most inflexible constancy, and evenness of temper, endure the want of all company, and natural refreshment, for forty days together; and the tempter thinking these circumstances had given him a fair opportunity of succeeding, attacked thee there. Then didst sustain a conflict of temptations, and deluding promises; that so by vanquishing this adversary, all his assaults and deceitful wiles might be more easily born, more successfully encountered, more resolutely withstood, when we reflect that the Captain of our salvation was tempted as we are, *yet without sin*; and consequently, that we engage a foe who hath been, and who may again be baffled.

When thus initiated by baptism, and fasting, and a victorious combat with the devil, thou didst begin to shew thyself openly, seeking in great compassion *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, enlightening the world with thy Divine doctrine, proclaiming the approach of thy spiritual kingdom, offering a most gracious acceptance to all, who would come into the obedience of faith, and confirming the truth of thy preaching by miracles and signs incontestable. Then did the power of the Godhead, residing in thy human body, exert itself most manifestly, when all manner of diseases and infirmities of devils, nay of deaths, yielded to thy irresistible command: and then thy power too was attended with the safety or advantage either of body or soul, which thou didst most freely distribute to all who were ready to receive it: thus wisely gaining upon men's necessities, and convincing them by their own sensible experience, that to be thy disciples was the greatest friendship they could possibly shew to themselves. But, alas! all these winning and excellent arts,

notwithstanding, how disproportionate was the event upon them, whom one would scarce imagine it possible not to have been won? For such was the degeneracy of that age and nation, that their foolish heart was hardened, their eyes blinded, the word of thy truth they cast contemptuously behind their backs, and through a most prodigious and stupid obstinacy, regarded not the wondrous evidences of thy Divinity, so often repeated among them, and for them, This was the case of the generality of people, with whom thou didst converse. Some few indeed there were of better dispositions, and more generous spirits; men, who dared to own, and to be champions for thy truth. And these thou didst single out from the mean and despised part of the world; that when the strong and great, the men of power and learning, of lust and interest, should, as they shortly did, fall a conquest to the low, illiterate, and unartful propagators of thy faith, the weakness of the instruments might leave the glory entire to the wise artificer, who had by them wrought effects, which the persons employed about were in their own nature in no degree qualified for.

Nay, had these perverse wretches only turned the deaf ear to this charmer sent from heaven, and pertinaciously refused the mighty benefits, which he was so exceeding solicitous to press upon them, even this ingratitude, though inexcusable, had fallen much short of the guilt they incurred upon that occasion. For, not content to reject and despise him, they improved their neglect into malice and implacable hatred: publicly affronted the Lord of lords, slandered and misrepresented his best and most beneficial miracles, and did unto him whatsoever the most inveterate rage, and the most impudent falsehood could suggest. For, when my blessed Saviour did among them *the works which no other man*

did, when the miracles were manifest, and they could not deny the operations of a supernatural power, then did they belch out their hardened infidelity, in lies and virulent reproaches; then wast thou, sweetest Jesus, cast in the teeth with such injurious characters as these: this man is not of God; he casteth out devils through the power of the devils; he hath a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him? He deceiveth the people. A gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. (John ix. 16; Matt. ix. 34; John x. 20; vii. 12; Luke vii. 34.) So outrageous is perverseness, so extravagant the imputations of prejudiced men, even against holiness, even against omnipotency, when a teacher, endued with both these in perfection, would inculcate doctrines which they resolve never to be persuaded to believe or practise.


CHAP. VI.

Of our Lord's last Supper with his Disciples, and the Treachery of Judas.

WHY art thou so vexed, O servant of God, and why is thy soul thus disquieted within thee? thou art reviled by the tongues of insolent and unjust men. And does that opprobrious language, or these wrongful aspersions upon thy good name, provoke these sighs, and tears, and bitter lamentations? Alas! these ought not greatly to move, these ought not at all to surprise thee. Hast thou forgot what Master thou servest, what contumelious treatment he met with upon earth from lying and licentious tongues; and what sort of usage he hath warned thee to expect, by saying, *the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you, and if they called*

the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? (Matt. x. 24, 25; John xv. 20.) These injuries and blasphemies, O meek and patient Jesus, thou didst endure, though frequently repeated. And when thy enemies, not content to vent their rage in the bitterest expressions of hatred and contempt, went about to stone thee, and attempted thy life, still thou didst bear with them, and wouldest not revenge the mischiefs they intended, but stoodst before them *as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth is no reproofs.*

And in this merciful and forbearing temper thou didst persevere to the end: for, when at last thy enemies had purchased thy most innocent and precious blood, and bargained with thy own disciple, that son of perdition, to sell thy life for thirty pieces of silver, the same meekness was eminently conspicuous to that vile wretch, who betrayed thee into the hands of those who sought thy destruction. Those treacherous practices were not hid from thee, but thou sawest the naughtiness of his heart, when in the last supper thou kneeledst down before him, and, without any distinction, didst, among the rest, wash even those cursed feet of his, which were swift to shed thy blood; and wipe them with thy holy hands. (John xiii. 5.) So invincible was thy patience, when yet thy power could have crushed him to pieces, and in a moment defeated all his villanous designs. And shall we, who are but dust and ashes, cherish angry resentments after such an example to the contrary? Shall we, suffer pride to transport us beyond ourselves, and swell with impatience and fury implacable against our brethren and equals, who do us wrong? Nay, but, O man, look upon this astonishing instance, this perfect emblem of meekness and humility. See the blessed Jesus, the maker of the universe, the



terrible and almighty Judge of quick and dead, kneeling at the feet of his own servant, and his own creature, of the abandoned wretch that betrayed him. Observe what a proof this Saviour gave, of his being what he declared himself to be, *meek and lowly in heart*, (Matt. xi. 29.) and let this reflection shame thee out of thy pride, and make thee blush at thy anger and impatience.

Consider again, how great a tenderness he shewed for that vilest of the sons of men, and how far he consulted his modesty, had there been yet any remains of it, who would not discover his wicked designs, nor put him to open shame by reproaching him with them directly before his brethren; but took the gentlest method of admonishing him, by hinting to him, that he was conscious of his malicious intentions, in that obscure but significant reproof, *What thou dost, do quickly*: and yet, notwithstanding all these intimations, he was not brought off from his hellish purpose, but rather hardened in his wickedness. For the text tells us, he *went out immediately*, and laboured to accomplish his villany forthwith. Good God! how obstinate, how inflexible a perverseness was this! how may we apply to that profligate apostle what the prophet says of the devil himself, *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning?* (Isa. iv. 12.) Thou that didst once shine so gloriously, that wert admitted into fellowship with the citizens of heaven, and a companion and constant attendant upon the Word of God himself! What an amazing, what a deplorable change is this! that thou shouldst now be numbered among the children of darkness and despair; and, after having been so long sustained with the delicious bread of life, shouldst at last choose dung and death? Then, blessed Jesus, when this polluted creature was separated from their company, thy family was pure and bright,

like the holy angels above; then was this happy assembly made to drink largely of those Divine instructions, which flowed most plenteously out of thy holy mouth: then didst thou proceed to pour out in great abundance, those spiritual comforts and supporting promises which the other disciples were qualified to receive, but that profane wretch had rendered himself altogether incapable and unworthy of. So careful wert thou not to cast thy precious pearls before swine; so liberal of them to those well-disposed minds who were desirous to be enriched, and prepared to improve by them.

CHAP. VII.

*Of Christ's retiring into the Garden, and his
Sufferings there.*

WHEN thou hadst thus, not only by thy example, but by thy most Divine discourses, inculcated upon thy disciples, the duties of charity and patience; then didst thou, sweetest Saviour, retreat to a place with which thy betrayer was well acquainted. And this, not through incautiousness, but to meet those indignities and sufferings, which thou knewest perfectly well before-hand would there come upon thee. There did thy soul confess its own amazement and heaviness even unto death. Nor didst thou esteem it any disparagement to the perfection of thy Divine nature, to acknowledge those agonies under which thy human laboured, upon the approach of that passion, which thou in marvellous love didst chuse to undergo. Then were thy brethren's ears wounded with that cutting complaint, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* (Matt. xxvi. 38.) There didst thou fall upon thy face, and on thy bended knees prefer thy petitions in

the multitude of thy inward griefs ; but still with an entire resignation to the will of God, even in those instances, to which flesh and blood hath the most irreconcilable abhorrence ; *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.* (Matt. xxvi. 29.) The sweats of blood, which streamed from thy holy body, and down upon the ground, while this prayer was uttered, gave abundant evidence of the unconceivable anguish of thy soul.

But, O Lord Jesu Christ, suffer me, I beseech thee, to expostulate with thee a little upon this occasion. Whence then, O mighty Lord, could that exceeding sorrow of thy soul proceed ?—Whence the incredible disorder of mind and body, that could force so unnatural a sweat ? Whence that so earnest and importunate supplication to be delivered from this bitter cup ? Was not the sacrifice of thyself offered to thy Father willingly and freely ? Was not it, therefore, so highly meritorious, because it was thy own choice and voluntary act ? And could the Lord of all the world be compelled to suffer any thing, which himself did not permit, and entirely consent to ? Undoubtedly, no man did, no man could *take thy life away from thee, but thou laidst it down of thyself.* (John x. 18.) And, therefore, we have reason to conclude, that these agonies and prayers were for our comfort and encouragement, submitted to for the support of thy feeble members ; that we should not despair upon the account of human and inseparable infirmities, nor suspect the sincerity of our own hearts, or the mercy of a gracious God in sharp trials ; though the weakness of our flesh should give back, and endeavour to decline those sufferings, to which our spirit is willing and ready to submit. Not only so, but from hence too we find fresh motives to love and gratitude : for, the more sensible we are

of the frailty of our own nature, the juster value we shall have of that infinite condescension, by which the Son of God took it upon him. And those pangs and prayers are an undoubted proof that thou didst really feel our infirmities, and with a tender and most afflicting sense of pain, run through the thorny stages of thy passion. That expression, *Let this cup pass from me*, seems plainly to have been extorted from thee by the vehemence of thy human affections; and, in some sense, we may have leave to apply to thee, what thou wert pleased to say to thy disciples, *The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak*. (Matt. xxvi. 41.) The readiness of thy spirit upon this most trying occasion was manifest beyond all reason of doubt, by many and most deliberate actions. For hadst thou not been well content, hadst thou not been most resolutely determined in thy own mind to suffer, why didst thou put thyself in the traitor's way? Why, when he came with lanterns, and torches, and weapons, and a band of soldiers that sought thy life, didst thou, of thy own accord, go forth to meet them? Why, when thy irresistible power had struck their forces down to the ground, didst thou again withdraw that restraint, and make thy enemies able to take thee? Why didst thou declare thyself the person they sought for, and comply with the signal given by the plotter and ringleader of all this villany? These circumstances will not allow us to suppose, that thou wert wavering, or loth to suffer. But that, which of all others seems most amazing, is, that thou shouldst not disdain the caresses of so vile a miscreant; that thou shouldst kiss that beast of prey, who thirsted for thy blood; and endure to let thy mouth, in which there was no guile, touch his, that was full of mischief and deceit, and all manner of malicious wickedness.

CHAP. VIII.

Jesus apprehended.

O LAMB of God, without blemish, and without spot, whiter than innocence itself! what part hadst thou with that black fiend, that ravenous wolf that came to tear thee in pieces? *What concord could Christ have with Belial?* (2 Cor. vi. 15.) None certainly. As well may light have fellowship with darkness. But even this condescension was kindly intended, and the traitor's crime became yet more inexcusable, for neglecting to improve it. Since now no instance of kindness had been wanting, which might soften his heart, and divert him from the obstinacy of his barbarous enterprize. He had shewed himself proof against intimations and admonitions, and threatenings before; and now our Lord makes this last experiment; and, to shame him if possible into repentance, puts him in mind first of their former intimacy and friendship, accosting him in those familiar terms, *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* (Matt. xxvi. 50.) and then upbraids the baseness and horror of his treachery, when covered under the disguise of kindness and respect, in that other question, *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?* (Luke xxii. 48.)

And now behold, *The Philistines are upon thee, Sampson; the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.* Of sinners stupid and bent upon wickedness even to a prodigy. For, who would not have expected, that their hearts should have misgiven them, when repulsed at their first assault, and beaten back to the earth by the strength of thy almighty arm? This was not done in thy own defence, or with any intent to rescue thyself out of their hands that sought thy life; but purely to

check the presumption of those wicked men, and let them plainly see, that their malice had no power over thee, farther than thou wert pleased to let it prevail at that time. And who can hear, without a very sensible grief, how cruelly they treated thee, how they proceeded in their murderous violence, how they bound thy holy hands, and drew this meek Lamb of God, who opened not his mouth, to the slaughter, with all the contumelious indignities due to robbers and murderers? Yet, such was the overflowing sweetness of thy mercy, as even in that instance to diffuse itself upon thy bitterest adversaries. For, when the forward zeal of thy disciple had cut off an ear of one that rudely assaulted thee, thou by thy powerful touch didst heal the wound, and protect thy defender from the revenge of them who had thee in custody. *Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel:* fierce to the last degree, and inflexibly set upon cruelty, since neither the majesty of thy miraculous power could awe it, nor the astonishing goodness of thy no less miraculous mercy, could soften it into pity or remorse.

CHAP. IX.

Our Lord buffeted, spit upon, and scourged.

IN pursuance of this implacable malice, my dearest Saviour was dragged to the high-priest's palace, and in the presence of the council, who thirsted for his blood, was adjudged to death, as a blasphemer, for confessing the truth, which he had taught through the whole course of his preaching. And, O my sweetest Jesus, how many barbarous insolences didst thou then undergo from thy own race and people? (Matt. xxvi.) That adorable face, which angels behold with reverence

and joy unspeakable, that sheds its bright beams of light, and fills all heaven with transport and triumph; that face, which all the rich and great ones of this world shall prostrate themselves before, with humble supplications, was then defiled and stained with the spittings of unhallowed lips; struck with the palms of sacrilegious hands, covered and blindfolded in derision; and the Lord of the universe made a laughing-stock to the rabble, and inhumanly buffeted, as if he had been the vilest of slaves. And was not this enough, ye barbarous wretches, to glut your fury? No: still he lives, and nothing but his blood can satisfy. Hence then he is forced away; and, that the gentiles too might bear a part in this black tragedy, the tongue of an uncircumcised dog must be made red with his blood. The next scene therefore presents him bound before Pilate, and all the people, by instigation of their wicked rulers, demanding vengeance, and requiring, that he should be crucified. See here, my soul, the blind perverseness of an enraged multitude. He, who had *done no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*; (1 Pet. ii. 2.) nay, he who had *gone about* constantly *doing good*, and signalized himself by miracles of mercy without number: (Acts 10. 38.) this man is refused, and a thief, a murderer, a ring-leader of sedition preferred before him: the harmless Lamb is declared unworthy to live, and a ravening wolf is spared from the death his crimes deserved. Good God! how unequal was the comparison! How absurd the exchange! How infatuated the persons that made it! How corrupt the judge that allowed it? For that wicked magistrate was sufficiently sensible, that envy was at the bottom of all these proceedings against thee; and yet that sense restrained him not from giving in to all their inhumanity: but he too, in despite of the checks of his own mind, lent a help-

ing hand to thy afflictions, and vexed that soul which they had injuriously wounded. He sent thee bound to *Herod*, (Luke xxiii. 7.) that thou mightest be yet more exposed to scorn and contempt; and, after all the mockings of him and his men of war had passed upon thee, he received thee again, arrayed in a gorgeous robe, and conducted with all the formal state of a mock king. Then did he strip thee of thy purple ornaments; with which thou hadst been lately clothed in derision, and produce thee to the gazing crowd naked, that in this form too thou mightest be made a spectacle, and every way feed their malice and scorn. After this shame succeeded pains and tortures; thy holy flesh was torn with merciless scourges, the *plowmen plowed upon thy back, and made long and deep furrows*; and every cutting stripe, every bruise and scar, was so far from inclining thy persecutors to relent, that they only provoked fresh blows, and added to the triumphs of their cruelty.

CHAP. X.

Jesus in the Common-hall.

BUT what, O best beloved Son of the great God, (Matt. xxvii. 27.) what hadst thou done, that could deserve such sufferings? What, to provoke such contumelious treatment? Not any thing indeed could be laid to thy charge; but I, even I, and every wretched sinner, were the true cause of all thy anguish and reproach. *Thou wert smitten of God, and afflicted; but they were our transgressions that wounded thee, and our iniquities that bruised thee.* (Isai. liii. 4, 5.) *I have eaten sour grapes, and thy teeth were set on edge.* (Ezek. xviii. 2.) And in thy person said the prophet truly, *I paid them the things that I never took.* But still neither the

bitterness of thy sorrows, nor the unexampled meekness with which they were endued, made any impression at all upon the hard-hearted Jews. When they had even wearied themselves with inflicting all manner of ignominy and torture, thou wert turned over to the less relenting hands of uncircumcised soldiers, sentenced and delivered up to a most scandalous and painful death. And was it not enough, ye blood-thirsty monsters, to crucify *this Lord of life and glory*, unless ye also wreaked your malice on him, and prefaced it with a new scene of scorn? For thus the Scriptures have declared you did, as if you were concerned for nothing more, than not to come behind the Jews in any manner of impious insolence and remorseless cruelty. Then, says the evangelist, *The soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common-hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand, and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying Hail, King of the Jews. And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head,*

CHAP. XI.

Jesus at Mount Calvary.

AND, after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him; and he went forth bearing his cross. And, when they were come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, the place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall, and when he had tasted thereof he would not drink. And there they crucified him, and two thieves with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. Then said Je-

sus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. *After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished! And when he had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And having said thus, he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. Then one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.* (Matt. xxvii. 31; Luke xxiii. John xix.)

CHAP. XII.

*Reflections upon the Mocking and Crucifixion
of our Lord.*

AWAKE now, my soul, and shake thyself from the dust, read this account with due attention, weigh every circumstance nicely, and consider this excellent Person, whom the history of the gospel, like a glass, sets present before thy eyes. Think, O my soul, who this is, that appears in the habit and pomp of a king, and yet covered at the same time with the confusion and shame of the most abject slave. Observe this mixture of honour and reproach. He stands before thee crowned, but even that crown is an addition to his torments; and every pointed thorn, of which it is composed, pierces his Divine head, and besmears his beautiful face with blood: his body is clothed with royal purple, but even that robe contributes to his disgrace, and does not command respect, but was intended to provoke the contempt of the spectators. He holds indeed a sceptre in his hand, but such a one as is employ-

ed in smiting his adorable head. The insolent creatures fall down upon their knees, and worship him in sport : they proclaim him king, and in the very next breath insult over him, spit upon his lovely cheeks, and strike him over the mouth with their fists, and strip him of those ornaments which were lent only to his dishonour. See how this King of Heaven is ridiculed by his own creatures, and his Almighty Majesty, by all possible methods, exposed to the derision of profane rebels : keep him company to the place of execution, and observe how his tender limbs bend under the burthen of the cross. Behold him carrying the instrument of shame, and disdaining nothing, that might render it as exquisite as even his bitterest enemies could contrive to make it. When arrived at the end of his painful journey, vinegar and gall are the refreshments allowed him after his toil ; such was the pity his fainting spirits found, such the recruits of his thirsting soul, bitter as the malice of them, who had exhausted his strength by the infinite variety of their repeated tortures.

Look on him next, stretched on the ground, his limbs extended on the cross, his hands and feet nailed to the cursed tree ; and, when it was erected, those wounds torn open by the weight of his body hanging upon these fastenings. And in this anguish, what were the words his grief extorted from him ? *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* O patience invincible ! O charity unmeasurable ! Not one syllable of angry resentment or murmuring complaint ; no indignation for such perfect innocence so causelessly injured and abused ; no wishes of revenge, nor imprecations upon the devoted heads of these brutish men ; but, even, in the extremity of torment, a calm and kind petition to his Father, a word of blessing, and the best excuse alleged in mitigation of their fault, which even the guilty them-

selves could have produced in bar to the condemnation and vengeance due to it. Never was such an instance of meek suffering, never so unwearied a love of enemies, never so kind an intercession for pardon, since the world began. Remember this, my soul, and, when thou findest thyself apt to be out of temper, for the affronts or wrongs thou sustainest, even when most unkind, even when most undeserved ; compare (though in truth there can be no comparison) thy sufferings with thy Lord's : then tell thyself, that he who gave thee command to *love thy enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use thee*, (Matt. v. 44.) did also leave thee an example of doing it, in a case to which thine can never be parallel.

Turn thine eyes this way yet once more, and let this object now before thee call up at once thy wonder and compassion ; for what will move thy tenderest pity, what thy astonishment, if thou art insensible upon this occasion ? Thy Lord and Saviour, thy best and dearest friend naked, and despised, his body rent and whealed with scourges, bruised and blue with blows, exposed to public view in the company of the vilest malefactors ; as if his crimes had been as black as theirs ; abhorred and insulted by his enemies, forsaken by his servants and friends ; his hands and feet gored with pins of iron ; his limbs distorted with anguish ; mocked in the very agonies of death with a bitter potion, his spirits exhausted with pain ; and, to shew that the malice and insolence of his persecutors did not expire even with his life, his sides in barbarous wantonness pierced with a spear after death. See how the blood gushes out from his wounds ? His head, his hands, his feet, his side, all sending out their purple streams in great abundance ! And can thy eyes behold all this, and still be dry ? O no ! Let my head be a fountain of waters, and my tears swell into a flood ;

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CHAP. XIII.

Jesus glorified in his Death.

I **W**HOL hast been hitherto engaged, my soul,
in contemplations that have exercised thy
compassion as well as wonder, and hast seen thy
Saviour in the lowest of his humiliations for thee.
But now it is time to change the scene, and to
present thee with a new and different prospect.
One that is equally amazing, and will convince
thee, that God did not forsake his Son, nor leave
him without ample testimonies of Divine majesty
and power, even in the extremity of sufferings
and reproaches. To this purpose the evangelists
have been careful to acquaint the world, that *from
the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land
until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened; and
the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top
to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks
rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies
of saints which slept arose.* (Matt. xxvii.; Luke
xxiii.) What manner of man is this, my soul,
that heaven and earth, and every element should
suffer with him, and at the time of his expiring
agonies diffuse such strong convulsions, such asto-
nishing appearances, through all created nature
here below? Nay, what an uncommon death
must that needs be, which thus inspired those who

were dead before with new life? Let these effects convince thee beyond all remains of scruple, as they ought then to have satisfied the eye-witnesses of them, that this is, this can be no other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, the only begotten Son of God, perfect God and perfect man; the only man indeed upon earth, who ever lived in our nature, and left no stain of sin upon it. And yet see how this unspotted innocence was *numbered among the transgressors*, cast out as a leper from human conversation, despised and rejected, the very scorn of men, and detestation of the people. He that was fair and lovely above the sons of men, wasted with misery, deformed with grief, and his *visage so marred more than the sons of men*, that as many as saw him *were perfectly astonished at him*. (Isaiah lii. 14.) Thus was he *wounded for our iniquities*, and sorely *bruised for our transgression*. (Isaiah liii. 5.) Thus did he fall a holy sacrifice offered upon the altar of the cross: an oblation of sweet-smelling savour, acceptable above any other, to thee, O King and Father of eternal glory: and all, that by his death, so wrongfully inflicted, so patiently sustained, he might turn away the fierceness of that wrath we had deserved, procure access for wretched sinners to thy mercy-seat; and having first purged us by his blood, might make us *sit down together with himself in heavenly places*, that *the exceeding riches of thy grace might be shewn in this inestimable kindness towards us through Christ Jesus*. (Ephes. ii. 6, 7.)

CHAP. XIV.

An Address to God the Father.

LOOK down then, O Lord, from thy holy place, from the dwelling of thy majesty in

let my whole soul dissolve, and let holy compassion and ardent love be the fire to melt it down. I will weep over this wonderful man; I will bear a part in all his sorrows; I will wash all his wounds. And, when the consideration what bitter things they were that he endured, hath spent itself, and had its full effect, the thought how meekly he endured them, shall minister fresh matter for my tenderness and contrition.

CHAP. XIII.

Jesus glorified in his Death.

THOU hast been hitherto engaged, my soul, in contemplations that have exercised thy compassion as well as wonder, and hast seen thy Saviour in the lowest of his humiliations for thee. But now it is time to change the scene, and to present thee with a new and different prospect. One that is equally amazing, and will convince thee, that God did not forsake his Son, nor leave him without ample testimonies of Divine majesty and power, even in the extremity of sufferings and reproaches. To this purpose the evangelists have been careful to acquaint the world, that *from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened; and the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose.* (Matt. xxvii.; Luke xxiii.) What manner of man is this, my soul, that heaven and earth, and every element should suffer with him, and at the time of his expiring agonies diffuse such strong convulsions, such astonishing appearances, through all created nature here below? Nay, what an uncommon death must that needs be, which thus inspired those who

were dead before with new life? Let these effects convince thee beyond all remains of scruple, as they ought then to have satisfied the eye-witnesses of them, that this is, this can be no other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, the only begotten Son of God, perfect God and perfect man; the only man indeed upon earth, who ever lived in our nature, and left no stain of sin upon it. And yet see how this unspotted innocence was *numbered among the transgressors*, cast out as a leper from human conversation, despised and rejected, the very scorn of men, and detestation of the people. He that was fair and lovely above the sons of men, wasted with misery, deformed with grief, and his *visage so marred more than the sons of men*, that as many as saw him *were perfectly astonished at him*. (Isaiah lii. 14.) Thus was he *wounded for our iniquities*, and sorely *bruised for our transgression*. (Isaiah liii. 5.) Thus did he fall a holy sacrifice offered upon the altar of the cross: an oblation of sweet-smelling savour, acceptable above any other, to thee, O King and Father of eternal glory: and all, that by his death, so wrongfully inflicted, so patiently sustained, he might turn away the fierceness of that wrath we had deserved, procure access for wretched sinners to thy mercy-seat; and having first purged us by his blood, might make us *sit down together with himself in heavenly places*, that *the exceeding riches of thy grace might be shewn in this inestimable kindness towards us through Christ Jesus*. (Ephes. ii. 6, 7.)

CHAP. XIV.

An Address to God the Father.

LOOK down then, O Lord, from thy holy place, from the dwelling of thy majesty in

the highest heavens, and let thine eyes delight themselves in this most precious and perfect sacrifice, which our great High-priest, thy holy child, Jesus, offered for the sins of his brethren; and do not then refuse to be entreated; but, though our backslidings are many, and we have very grievously rebelled, yet let thine anger be turned away, and cause thy face to shine upon us, in the comforts of pardon and peace, for the Lord's sake. Behold the *voice of our brother's blood, even the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel, crying aloud to thee* from the cross. (Gen. iv. 10; Heb. xii. 24.) And is it possible that he should hang there to no purpose? Yet hang there still he does in effect; for all things past are present to thee as if they were now in action; and likewise in regard of that continual representation of his sufferings, made by the church's daily prayers and sacraments on earth, and his own most gracious and powerful intercession in heaven. See now, and know, dear Father, that *this is thy son's coat, even the true Joseph, of whom the patriarch heretofore was but an humble type.* (Gen. xxxvii. 33.) *An evil beast hath devoured him, trampled his clothing under foot in its fury, and stained the beauty of it with his blood.* See, I beseech thee, the five ghastly wounds, with which the merciless creature rent his tender body. Behold the garment which the chaste and sinless youth left in the hands of the Egyptian harlot, (Gen. xxxix. 15.) his clothing of flesh torn off by a wicked and adulterous generation: remember how he rather chose to part with this, than stain his innocence, preferring a voluntary poverty, a long succession of sorrows, and the very dungeon of death, before the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, when the seducing tempter laid that bait, *All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*

(Matt. iv. 9.) And now, O Lord, our heavenly Father, consider, that *thy Son is yet alive, and behold he is governor over all the land of Egypt*: (Gen. xlv. 26.) yea, as far as thy dominions extend over the face of the whole earth: for thou hast raised him from the prisons of hell and the grave, exalted him very highly, and seated him upon thy own throne; hast made him to put off mortality, and adorned his crucified flesh with beauty exquisite, and immortal life. He hath utterly overthrown the tyranny of the merciless Pharoah; burst through the bands of death, led the infernal powers captive, as by his own invincible Divine power triumphantly ascended into his native heaven. I see, I see him with the eyes of faith, crowned with glory and honour, standing for ever in thy presence at the right hand of thy majesty to make intercession for us. And who can doubt the affection or success of that intercession? (Heb. vii. 25.) For he is God of thy substance, and man of ours; he who is thy son is also our brother, bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh.

CHAP. XV.

That the Son hath paid the Debt due to Divine Justice for us.

TURN not away then, Lord, *the face of thy anointed, who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, (Phil. ii. 8.) but let the scars of those wounds he received in the body be ever present in thy sight, that thou mayest always recollect, how ample a satisfaction for the sins of men thou hast received at his hand. O that, when thou weighest our offences in the balance, thou wouldest be pleased at the same time to make the miseries, which thy own sinless and beloved

Son endured for our sakes, the happy counterpoise to them. This, I am well assured, will prove the heavier scale. And though our wickednesses weigh us down, and be an insupportable load, considered in themselves, yet more and mightier are the merits of his sufferings to incline the abundance of thy mercy, than can the heinousness of our transgressions possibly be to provoke thy indignation. I thank thee, therefore, heavenly Father, from the very bottom of my heart; and fit it is that every tongue should join in setting forth the praises of thy unspeakable goodness, which *spared* not thy only Son, the Son of thy love, but *delivered him up for us all*; (Rom. viii. 32.) delivered him to a most painful, ignominious death, that so we might be blessed with so powerful an advocate, so affectionate a friend, in the court of heaven, to plead our cause successfully before thee.

CHAP. XVI.

The Love due to the Son for his Sufferings.

BUT, O sweetest, kindest Jesus, how shall I thank thee as I ought, or what requital can I make for thy wonderful condescension? How is it possible, indeed, that dust and ashes, as I am, the meanest and most unworthy of all thy creatures, should be capable of any return, that might bear proportion to that amazing excess of unmeasurable love, which I am not capable so much as worthily to conceive? What could be done, what could be thought of, for my benefit and salvation, which thou hast not submitted to do for me? From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, thou didst plunge thyself in sufferings and sorrows, that thou mightest pluck me out, and rescue me entirely from the deep waters,

when all the waves and storms of misery had overwhelmed me, and were *come in even unto my soul*. (Psa. lxxix. 1.) Thou countedst not thy own life dear unto thee, but didst pour out thy soul unto death, to redeem that forfeit life of mine, over which death, entering by sin, had gotten the dominion. Thus hast thou bound me to thyself by a double obligation; and I am now thy debtor, both for that which thou hast restored to me, and for that which thou hast laid down for me. And since my life is thus made twice thy gift, first by creation, and afterwards by redemption, how can I make thee better payment, than by devoting entirely to thee, that every thing which I received from thee? For that part of the dead then in which my life is concerned, somewhat I have, though very small, to offer thee by way of satisfaction: but for thy own life, so precious, and yet so exceedingly afflicted for my sake, I must acknowledge myself utterly at a loss, and am sensible it is not in the power of all mankind to make thee any manner of compensation. For, though I were master of heaven and earth, and all the glories and treasures of both, yet could I not, upon these terms, make thee a recompense at all suitable to the value of the debt. Nay, even that little, which I am bound and qualified to do, cannot be done without thee; and if I give thee any thing at all, it is because thou givest me power to give it. Thou art pleased to require, and most reasonable it is, that I should *love thee with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my mind, and with all my strength*; (Matt. xxii. 37); that as thou *hast left me an example*, so I should *walk in thy steps* (1 Pet. ii. 21.): and can I dispute my engagement to *live to thee*, (2 Cor. v. 15.) who hast condescended not only to live, but even to die for me? No, dearest Lord, I am duly sensible of the obligation, but sensible

withal, that this obligation can never be discharged, without the assistance of thy grace. *O draw me then, that I may run after thee; knit my heart to thee, that I may love thy name, (Psa. lxxxvi. 11);* and let my soul cleave stedfastly to my Lord; *for I am not sufficient of myself to do or think any thing as of myself; but all my sufficiency is of thee,* my Lord and my God, (2 Cor. iii. 5.)

CHAP. XVII.

An humble Address to the Son.

TO thee, therefore, O blessed Jesus, my tender Redeemer, my merciful Lord, I flee for succour; I acknowledge and adore thee, as very God; my faith, my hope, and all my desires are fixed on thee alone. Not as I would, indeed; for, alas! my faith is imperfect, my hope feeble, my desires lukewarm and cold; but, O! do thou strengthen my weakness, supply my defects, inflame my zeal, and where I cannot attain to what I ought accept what I do, for what I would do if I were able. In the meanwhile, to render these inclinations as effectual as I can, I will frequently and devoutly meditate upon the glorious marks and monuments of thy bitter passion. I see with joy that once-derided cross converted now into a royal banner, a trophy of the glorious conquests gained by thy triumphant gospel, a standard set up for all nations and kindreds of the earth to come into and fight under. Thy crown of thorns, thy nails red with thy gore, the lance that pierced thy holy side, thy wounds, thy blood, thy death, thy burial, thy resurrection from the grave, and exaltation to the throne of glory, shall be the entertainment of my retired thoughts, my daily song, my boast, and the glad subject of my never-ceasing praise. For every one of these conspire to

quicken my soul ; and, by the contemplation of thy death, I feel a principle of new and spiritual life kindled or cherished in me. O make these means effectual for raising me up from the death of sin, no more to return to corruption ! Guard me, I pray thee, from the subtle insinuations of the tempter ; strengthen and defend me against his assaults ; make the yoke of thy commandments easy, and the burden of the cross, which thou requirest me to carry after thee, by thy sustaining comforts, portable and light. For, alas ! what strength have I without thee, or how is it possible for such a disabled poor creature to bear up, with courage and constancy, against the vast variety of disasters and trials, which the condition of human life is perpetually exercised with, and thou expectest I should fight my way through ? Are my feet like harts' feet, that I should keep pace with thee ; who didst so nimbly run through the briars and thorns of adversities and sufferings ? Hearken, I beseech thee, to the voice of thy servant, and lay upon me that sweet cross of thine, which is a tree of life to them that lay hold on it, that I may finish my course faithfully and cheerfully. O that my shoulders might be worthy to bear that Divine mystical cross ! the breadth whereof is a most extensive charity, taking in every creature ; the length whereof is eternity ; the height, omnipotence ; and the depth, unsearchable wisdom. Let my hands and my feet be nailed to this cross, and do thou vouchsafe to thy servant the favour of being conformed to thy likeness, and acting over again in my soul the several stages of my blessed Master's passion.

Enable me, I humbly pray thee, to abstain from the works of the flesh, which thou hatest, to perform diligently the works of righteousness, which thou lovest ; and both in the evil I decline, and in the good I perform, to seek not my own,

but thy glory: so shall my left hand be fastened as it were to thy cross by the nail of *temperance*, and my right hand by that of *justice*. Let my soul be continually exercising and delighting itself in the law of my God, directing all its thoughts to, and casting all its cares upon thee; and then I shall imagine my right foot fixed to this mystical tree of life, by the nail of *prudence*. Grant that my sensual affections may always continue in subservience to my reasonable mind; suffer not the treacherous, and even afflicting prosperities of the world to emasculate my soul, nor the profitable adversities of it to disturb or confound my pursuit of eternal rewards; so shall I be safe from unmanly fears and effeminate desires, and I shall look upon my left foot to be fastened to thy cross by the nail of *fortitude*. Work in me also some resemblance to thy *crown of thorns*, by wounding my spirit with a true and tender compunction for my past sins, by a remorse effectual to repentance, by a fellow-feeling for the sufferings of my brethren, by holy and active zeal for that which is well-pleasing in thy sight; and by taking sanctuary in thee whensoever troubles or afflictions of any sort shall threaten or oppress me. I should be likewise exceeding glad if thou wouldest put thy *sponge upon a reed* to my mouth, and make me sometimes taste the sharpness of thy *vinegar*; I mean, if by the wholesome instructions of thy holy word, thou wouldest convince my reason, how justly the world, even in its most flattering and flourishing circumstance, may be compared to an empty *sponge*, and all the love and anxious desire of it to nauseous and griping *vinegar*. Thus let me be dealt with, O merciful Father, that the golden cup of *Babylon*, which intoxicates all the children of this generation, may neither seduce me with its bewitching gaieties, nor make me drunk with its false and

sickly lusciousness, as it does those miserably deluded men, who *put darkness for light, and light for darkness, bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*. The wine of *myrrh mingled with gall* I ask not, because thou didst thyself refuse to drink of it. Possibly, for that it represented the bitterness of envy, and that inflexible malice, which transported thy crucifiers to such a barbarous excess of wickedness and rage.

But, above all, I beseech thee, let thy life-giving *death* be most exactly represented in my whole conversation, that I may be effectually *dead unto sin after the flesh, but alive unto righteousness, through the Spirit*. And, that I may obtain the privilege of having no particular passage of my crucified Lord's likeness left unimpressed upon me, produce in me, I beseech thee, a strict conformity even to that instance of insatiable malice, which thy implacable enemies acted upon thy body after death. Let thy word, quick and powerful, strike through my very soul, let it reach to the most secret thoughts and intents of my heart, and cut sharper than the keenest lance; that as the blood and water started from thy side in great abundance, so from my heart thus pierced, may overflow the love of thee, my dearest Lord, and my fellow-Christians. Finally, wrap thou my soul in the clean linen of innocence and holiness, that when it shall depart this mortal body, I may rest in peace and hope; that thou mayest hide me in the bed of dust, till thy Father's indignation be overpassed; and that, when I awake up after thy likeness, I may enter with thee into the blissful mansions of thy heavenly dwelling.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of our Lord's Resurrection.

THUS shall I not only *be planted together with* my Lord, *in the likeness of his death, but also in the likeness of his resurrection.* (Rom. vi. 5.) And on the third day, after the day of rest, and when the morning of the eternal sabbath shall begin to dawn, thou shalt restore thy most unworthy servant to a new and better life: (Job xix. 26.) then shall I in this flesh of mine, see the majesty of my triumphant Redeemer, and be filled with the joy of thy countenance. O my most merciful Saviour and my God, hasten, hasten, I beseech thee, that long-wished for day; that what *I now behold with the eyes of faith, and as in a glass only*, (2 Cor. iii. 18.) I then may see distinctly, and *with open face*: that what I now reach forward to by a distant hope, I then may be in actual and full possession of; that what I now desire according to my poor capacity, I then may grasp and hold fast; be ravished with in the enjoyment of, and be entirely swallowed up in the abyss of thy rapturous love: O most merciful Saviour, O my most glorious God; fain would I expatiate upon this delightful theme, and even now anticipate the joys of thy glorious presence; but words are too weak, and thoughts too narrow, for the unequal subject: and therefore let me rather apply myself to what my present condition is qualified for. Praise then the Lord, O my soul, and magnify the mercies of thy compassionate Jesus. Tell it out among all the world, how exceeding gracious he hath been to thee, and give him the honours due to that charming name; *for his name only is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth.*

CHAP. XIX.

A Prayer to the Holy Trinity.

O HOW plentiful is thy goodness, O how transporting sweet thy mercy, dearest Lord Jesus, to every soul that seeks and thirsts after thee! Jesus, thou releaser of them that are in captivity, thou restorer of them that are lost, thou hope of them that are in exile, thou strength of them that are weak, thou refreshment of them that languish and faint, thou enlargement of them that are straitened, thou comfort of every sorrowful soul; Jesus, thou support and sure defence of them that fight manfully; Jesus, thou bright crown of all that conquer in the spiritual warfare; thou only reward of the faithful, thou joy unspeakable of all the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem; Jesus, thou inexhaustible source of all virtues and graces; Jesus, thou glorious offspring of the most high God. O thyself God most high; be thou ever praised and adored by every creature in heaven above, and in the earth beneath; for great art thou, and canst not worthily be praised. O ever blooming, ever refulgent beauty of the Majesty above, thou brightest beam of everlasting light; thou life, by whose genial influence every living creature lives; thou light, from whose reflection every thing shines, and by the communication of whose rays it is, that thousands of millions of thousands of glorious spirits, preserve the resplendent brightness shed by thee upon them, and all the glittering hosts of heaven stand round about the throne of thy glory, ever since time was. O eternal and everlasting, O pure and clear stream, issuing from that fountain, which no human eyes can discover; a fountain, without any first rise, a current, without

any bottom, whose waters no banks circumscribe, no soil pollutes or troubles : the mind of the most high God produced thee out of the unfathomable depth of his own infinite capacity : Thus thou art life of life, light of light, very God of very God, an eternal and incomprehensible Son of an eternal and incomprehensible Father ; of the same substance and equal perfections with him that begat thee ; in whom all *the fulness of the Godhead dwells*, and of whose fulness we have all received, in such proportions of thy Spirit as our frail state admits, as our necessities require, as thou, in thy unerring wisdom, seest most expedient for us.

And thou, O plenteous source of every good and every perfect gift, shed abroad the cheering light of thy seven-fold grace over my heart. Yea, Spirit of love and goodness, I most humbly implore thy seasonable assistances. Thou knowest my faults, my failings, and my necessities : the dimness of my understanding, the inordinacy and vehemence of my affections, and the perverseness of my will. When therefore thou observest (as observe constantly thou dost) that I, who am, alas ! exceeding frail, am not sufficiently instructed in the knowledge of thy will ; or if I know, but (through giddiness or inadvertency, or drawn off by the bias of flesh and sense) I neglect to practise what I know ; visit me, I beseech thee, with thy grace. Enlighten my mind, rectify my desires, correct my wanderings, and pardon my omissions ; that so, I, who invoke thee here as my pilot to conduct me through this rough and hazardous sea of life ; may, by thy guidance be preserved from making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, and at length be safe landed at the haven of eternal rest. Lastly, to thee I make my prayer, most merciful Father, that thou, who gavest me being by thy creating power, and since didst give me a new and better being, by the suffer-

ings of thy only-begotten Son, and regeneration through him, wouldest work in me both to will and to do of thy good pleasure; and fix my thoughts and affections upon such objects only as conduce to thy honour, and my own salvation. And, since my frailties are great, and I cannot do what I ought and would, preserve in me a due care to make my peace with thee daily, by confession of my past faults, by diligent examinations of my conscience, and resolutions of living better, and growing every day more and more in goodness, till at length I obtain the benefits purchased for me by my dear Redeemer. And then, whatever good work I shall be enabled to do by thy grace, grant that they may all turn entirely to thy glory: help me, I beseech thee, to gain such conquests over my sins, and fortify me so effectually against temptations, and grant me to advance so prosperously in the ways of holiness, that all the time I shall continue in this mortal body, I may be perpetually doing thee acceptable service in some kind or other, such as thy providence shall call me to. And when this life shall end, Lord, of thy infinite mercy, grant me an entire remission of all my sins, and reward my imperfect obedience with eternal life. All which I beg, for his merits and mediation, who died to purchase it for sincere penitents and true believers, and who now liveth and reigneth with thee, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

DEVOUT MEDITATIONS
OF
ST. BERNARD:
WITH REGARD TO
THE STATE OF HUMAN NATURE,
OTHERWISE CALLED
HIS BOOK OF THE SOUL.

Book VIII.

CHAP. I:

The Dignity of Man with regard to his Soul.

MANY are deeply learned in variety of arts and sciences, and all the while continue as profoundly ignorant of themselves: they are inquisitive about the affairs of other men, and perfectly void of thought or care for their own. Nay, even in their most useful and necessary studies, where God is the subject of the inquiry, they think to find him in the things without them, and overlook the evidences of him within their own breasts: none of which, though within them, is yet so intimate and close to them, as God. I desire then that I may proceed in a quite contrary method, and from external, retire to internal evidences;

from objects within, rise up to those above me ; that by these I may at last understand from whence I come, and whither I am bound ; what I am, why I am, and from whom I am ; that so this knowledge of myself may lead me up to the knowledge of God. For the more perfect understanding I have of my own condition, the nearer I shall approach to, and advance proportionably towards the right understanding of the Divine nature and perfections.

Now when I turn my eyes inward, I discover three distinct faculties in my soul, whereby I am qualified to remember, and contemplate, and desire God. These are the memory, the understanding and the will. By the first of which I recollect, by the second I discern, and by the last I love and embrace him. When I reflect upon God, I find him in my memory, and delight in him by those remembrances, according to that measure of satisfaction, which he is pleased to impart to me. By my intelligent faculty, I see what God is in himself, what in his angels and saints, what in men, and the other works of his hands ; each of which contribute to the manifestation of his excellences. In himself he is incomprehensible, the beginning and the end, the beginning without conclusion, the end without any more excellent end to which it is ultimately referred. The consideration of myself convinces me how far God must needs exceed all comprehension, because I find myself unable perfectly to understand myself ; who yet am but one of his creatures : considered in the angels, he appears lovely and desirable, because their constant happiness and employment is to behold and look into him. In the saints I find him full of delight, because those blessed spirits rejoice in him. In the creatures he appears wonderful, because creating all things by his power,

governing all things by his wisdom, and disposing all things by a good and kind Providence.

In men he is the most worthy object of love, because he is their God, and they are his people. He dwells in them, as in his own house, and they are his temple, in which his Divine presence resides. He does not disdain the whole species, nor any individual person of it. Whoever remembers, and understands, and *loves him, the same is with him. We ought to love him, because he first loved us.* (1 John iv. 19.) He made us after his own image, in his own likeness, which was a privilege vouchsafed to no other creature besides. Now, when we are said to be made *after God's image*, the mystical meaning may be, that we are made to understand and be acquainted with the Son, by whom we come to an understanding of and acquaintance with the Father, and gain access to him. So near is the relation between us and the Son of God, that the Son of God is himself the express image of the Father, and we are made after that image of him. And this nearness of relation is farther signified by saying that we are made *after his likeness*, and not only *in his image*. (Gen. i. 26.) For that which is made in the image of another, must agree with the original model, and not only partake of an empty name, without any real similitude to justify it.

Let us be careful then to express this likeness, and make our resemblance to God appear in the desire of peace, the contemplation of truth, and the love of charity. Let us keep God in our remembrance, carry him in our consciences, and behave ourselves with that deference and respect, becoming men that believe him to be always present with them. For it is in this regard, that our mind is his image, as it is capable of receiving and partaking of him. It is for that reason his image,

because, like him, it remembers, understands, and loves itself; and more especially, because, while it does so, it is capable of rising higher, by remembering, considering, and loving its Maker; in the doing whereof consists its true improvement and wisdom. For nothing comes so near to that perfect wisdom above, as the rational mind; which by its three faculties, of memory, understanding and will, subsists in that inexplicable trinity of the Divine persons, as an image does in its original.

But in that original it does not truly subsist, except in conformity to it, it remember, and consider, and love it. Let it therefore be careful to remember that God, after whose image it was made; let it endeavour to understand and love him, by whom it is endued with a capacity of being for ever happy, together with himself.

For happy is that soul, with whom God takes up his residence, makes it the place of his rest. Happy, which can say, *He that formed me, hath lodged and dwelt in my tabernacle*; for to such a one he cannot deny the rest of heaven. ~~When~~ then do we go out of ourselves, and seek God in external objects, who all the while is with and in us, if we do but make it our business to be with, and in him? For he is certainly with, and in us at present, by a lively faith, which is all the union we can attain to, till he admit us to see him face to face. Thus the apostle says; we know that *Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith*; (Ephes. iii. 17.) for Christ is in our faith, faith in our soul, the soul in our heart, the heart in our breast. By faith then I reflect upon and remember God in the quality of my Creator, I adore him as my Redeemer, I wait for him as my Saviour. I believe that I see him in all his creatures, that I have him in myself, and (which is unspeakably more pleasant and happy than all the rest) that I know him

as he is. For *to know* the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, is *life eternal*; (John xvii. 3.) consummate felicity, and the very perfection of transport and delight.

No mortal can conceive, how bright, how sweet, how ravishing we shall find that vision to be, when we shall see God face to face; that light of them who shine by his reflection; that repose of them who have been exercised by labours and sufferings; that country of them who are called home from exile; that life of them that live; the crown of them that overcome. In the meanwhile the image of that blessed glorious Trinity, which I find in my own soul, teaches me, that I ought to make the remembrance, and knowledge, and love of that Trinity which I resemble, the main design of all my actions, and the chief end of living. For the mind is the likeness of God, and in it are three powers, memory, understanding, and will. We attribute our advancement in knowledge to memory, though this be not strictly the faculty by which we think. We attribute all our knowledge to the understanding also, because by thinking we find out the truth, which when found, we commit to the custody of our memory. Memory is more particularly our resemblance to the Father, our understanding to the Son, and our will to the Holy Ghost. No part of us is so like the Holy Spirit, as our will or love: and kind affection is nothing else than a modification and exaltation of the will, in that which is its proper excellence. Love is not only the gift, but the best gift of God: (1 John iv. 7.) for that love which is of God, and which God is, is properly styled the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, and all the Trinity dwells in us.

CHAP. II.

The Misery of Man, with respect to his Body.

SUCH are the privileges of the inward man, but the condition of my outward is very different. For in this respect, I owe my being to parents, who propagated to me that contagion, which even before I was born, rendered me liable to damnation. How could it be otherwise, when sinners beget a sinner in their sin, and nourished him of sin? So that from them I derive nothing but misery and sin, and that corruptible body which I carry about with me. And after them I am going apace, who are removed out of this world by the death of the body before me, I look into the graves of my ancestors, and find nothing there but dust and worms, stench and horror. And yet what I now am, these very lately were; and what they are now, I shall as certainly be in a little time: for what, alas! is this body, but a little matter *curdled* into flesh, and by degrees fashioned till I came to maturity for the birth? (Job x. 10.) Thus was I born man, and entering into the world with cries and tears, was turned loose into it to sojourn for a while; and when this pilgrimage is at an end, I shall expire full of guilt and corruption: for the time hastens towards me, when I must be brought before a severe Judge, and called to render an account of all that ever was done by me, whilst upon earth.

But, oh! what confusion, what misery shall overwhelm me then, when that day of inquiry shall come, and the books of remembrance shall be opened, in which not only my actions, but the very thoughts of my heart are faithfully registered, and shall be every one recited before my Lord and Judge? Then shall this sinful creature hang

down his head, and stand trembling and perplexed with the reproaches of a guilty conscience, and the amazing recollections of former offences: for these shall rise up and refresh my memory, when it shall be said, *Behold the man and his deeds.* The power and providence of God so ordering the matter, that by a miraculous operation, there shall not any good or evil thing done through the whole course of my life be absent, but all appear in an instant, and at once crowd in, and present themselves distinctly to my thoughts, to bear testimony for or against me. And thus shall all mankind together, and each person singly, be judged before the tribunal of the great and just God. It is to little purpose, that we lay so many contrivances for shifts and secresy, and strive to hide our shame; for what we now blush to own, shall then be laid open to the whole world; and what we labour to disguise, shall be exposed in its true colours; and all our artifice and hypocrisy, like stubble, perish in that fire, the trial whereof nothing but sincerity and innocence can abide. And the longer God forbears us in order to our amendment, the heavier will our account be for abusing his patience, and neglecting the precious opportunities afforded us for second and better thoughts.

Why should we then be so immoderately fond of a life, which cannot be prolonged but by a proportionable addition to the number of our crimes? For every day inflames the reckoning; our sins grow upon us, and (too generally speaking) our virtues languish and decrease. That *man never continues in one stay*, is as true with regard to his spiritual as his natural life. The prosperous and adverse events make each of them some change in his temper and condition; and how soon or how late death will put an end to these he cannot at all tell: for as a star that glitters in the

heavens runs its course swiftly, and suddenly falls and goes out, so is the life of man, swift in its passage, short in its continuance, and sudden in its conclusion. How often do we see men intent upon nothing but diversion, or laying designs for many years to come, snatched away in a moment, and the soul compelled to take a very abrupt leave of the body? And these two then, God knows, cannot part without mighty consternation, and many acute pains: for the angels stand ready to conduct the soul to judgment, and bring it to the dreadful bar of their just God: And the reflections on all the grievous offences committed night and day rise up and terrify her; make her wish above all things that she could escape, nay, that she should put off the trial; and obtain leave but for one poor hour to provide better for this important day, and endeavour, if possible, to make her peace with God.

Then shall the man's works challenge him, and, as it were all crying with one voice, say, *Thou hast done us, we are thine; we will not be shaken off, but stick close to thee, and bear thee company to judgment.* Then shall every sin start up, and load the wretch with innumerable aggravations. Nay, to the true, shall add false testimonies, and invent unnecessary lies; unnecessary to be sure, since even the truth, alas! is what would more than suffice to convict and condemn men. At the same time, the devils shall scare sinners with their ghastly faces, and fly at them with implacable fury, hurrying them down to the bottomless pit immediately, unless some seasonable deliverer step in betwixt them, and rescue this prey out of the mouths of the lions. Then shall the soul, finding the eyes shut, and all the other senses disabled, by which she used to go in and out, and revel in sensual objects, return into itself, and finding itself destitute and naked, sink and die away with

upon things that are profitable and good, but let our hearts loose after trifles and impertinences, that cannot turn to any benefit. And yet let us be never so sensible of the fault and folly of doing so, it is no very easy matter to avoid it: for our hearts are apt to fly out, greedy of variety and diversion, and ever hankering after loose and worldly imaginations; which, though they may not strictly and in themselves be unlawful, yet have a mighty tendency to such as are; for it requires great conduct to manage even the most serious affairs of the present life, without being betrayed into sin by them. No wonder, then, that none of us can make a true judgment, or arrive at a perfect understanding of himself, but in the vast variety of business and accidents, and projects and perplexed thoughts, remain in great measure a stranger to himself, and lie under miseries which even himself does not feel. And this confusion must needs increase men's fears when death approaches, and hurries them on to judgment: for though one be never so cautious not to fail in the recollection of those things he knows, yet who shall secure him from very just and dreadful apprehensions arising from the numberless faults he does not know?

CHAP. III.

Reflections upon the excellent Nature and Privileges of the Soul.

WHAT, my soul, what hast thou to do with the flesh? Thou, who art adorned with the likeness of thy Master, enriched with his holiness and immortality! What hast thou to do with that flesh which exposes thee to so much suffering and misery? For from this flesh it is, that the sin never actually committed by thee is laid to thy

charge; that the righteousness of thy own doing is no better than filthy rags, and that thou art reduced so low, as to be esteemed little better than vanity and nothing. The flesh, with which thou maintainest so strict a friendship, is in itself no better than froth and bubble, clothed with a gay, but frail and decayed beauty; and a time will shortly come, when all its boasted charms shall sink into a rotten carcase, and be only food for worms: for, after all thy care to dress and set it off, thou canst not change its nature, nor make it cease to be flesh. Consider a little those constant evacuations, the discharges of thy mouth, and nose, and other passages, without which the body cannot subsist; and ask thyself how much this differs from a common-sewer. But there is a much more melancholy consideration yet behind; for, if thou wouldest sit down and undertake to compute, how this flesh is loaded with guilt, and frailty, entangled with vicious habits, urged and inflamed with unlawful desires, overborne with unruly passions, deluded with temptations and deceits, prone to evil perpetually; thus it will appear full of all manner of mischief and reproach. This is the thing that renders *every man living altogether vanity* (Psa. xxxix. 5.); for here the snares of concupiscence are laid, which captivate the mind, and draw it off to the love of vanity, and the commission of iniquity.

Think then, O man, for it concerns thee highly: think what thou wert before thy birth, what thou art from the time of thy coming into this world to the time of thy going out of it, and what thou shalt be after this life is at an end. A time there hath been when thou wert not at all; and when thou didst begin to be, it was in such a manner as modesty will not bear a particular description of. The ornaments and advantages with which thou appearest in the world, make thee forget the

meanness of thy original, and not only what thou once wert, but what thou art at present. For indeed this gaudy creature is no better than a bundle of corruption, and food for insects: first, blood, then man, afterwards, worms and no man. What poor pretence hath such a creature as this, to please or boast himself: how absurd is it for dust and ashes to be proud, which was conceived in sin, born to misery, lives in pain, and dies with agony and terror; nay, knows there is no remedy, but die he must: to what purpose is it, that thou art at so much cost and pains to feed and to adorn that, which in a few days hence will be a nuisance to its best friends, and when disposed of in the grave, shall turn to putrefaction, and be itself a feast for worms? How much more wisely were thy hours and thy purse employed in adorning thy soul with good works, and rendering this agreeable in the sight of God, and his holy angels, before whom it must one day be present.

What a folly, what an indignity is it, to despise thy soul, as if it were nothing worth, and give thy flesh the preference in thy care and esteem? To make the mistress serve, and put the government into the maid's hand is highly unjust and absurd. God, it is plain, took other measures; he did not think fit to lay down his life for all the things of this world, though he grudged it not for the sake of man. So that the soul is manifestly of more value than all this world, since it could not be deemed at a lower price, than the blood of Christ himself? What then wilt thou, who art so ready to exchange for it, who art so lavish of thy treasure, to squander it away for nothing? And yet was it not this soul that Jesus Christ who lay in the bosom of the Father, and descended from his throne in heaven, to redeem it from power and usurpation of the devil? What then wilt thou, that when he saw



chains of her sins, and delivered up like a guilty malefactor in the hands of tormentors, to receive sentence of eternal death, he tenderly wept over her and for her, when so insensible of her own misery, that she shed not one tear for herself? Nor did his marvellous compassion content itself with tears only, but he shed his very blood, and would not decline an ignominious and most bitter death for her redemption. Consider this, man, and be sensible how noble a soul thou hast, how mortal those wounds were, which nothing less could heal, than the wounds of thy Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: for had not those sicknesses been unto death, nay, unto death eternal, the Son of God had never died for thy cure. Do not therefore think any suffering of thy soul a matter unworthy thy most serious regard, when thou seest so much tenderness already expressed for it, by a majesty so glorious, so infinitely above thee. Thy God shed tears of compassion for thee, do not think much to wash thy couch day and night with the tears of repentance and holy contrition. He poured out his blood on the cross for thy sake, do thou spend thine in daily crucifixion of thy own flesh with its affections and lusts. Thou mayest not perhaps be called upon to sacrifice thy life at once for his sake; but this that I advise, is real martyrdom; and what is wanting in the acuteness and horror, may be made up by the length of its pains. Let thy business therefore be to satisfy the uses and ends of the spirit, and not to gratify the covetings of the flesh: for this spirit shall be glorious at the return to God, provided due endeavours be applied for its removal out of the body, pure of sin, and purged by repentance, from the pollutions which it contracted by conversing in the midst of a naughty and miserable world.

If you reply, that it is a hard saying, you can-

not despise the world, nor hate your own flesh : tell me, I beseech you, what is become of all those lovers of the world, who had such plenty, and were so fond of its enjoyments, but a few years ago. What is there of them now remaining, but dust and worms, and the remembrance of their folly? Remember what they were, and think what they now are. They were men, such as you. They eat and drank liberally, were profuse in mirth, and nights and days were spent in laughter and luxury ; at last, when they thought of nothing less, in a moment they were gone and sunk into hell : their flesh was made a prey to worms, their souls new fuel to eternal flames ; and thus shall each continue, till both are brought together again ; and, by a most unhappy union, partake for ever in the punishment, as they before had been partners in the crimes that deserved it. What fruit have these men now of their vain-glories, their transitory joys, their worldly power and grandeur, their sensual pleasures, their mistaken and deceitful riches, their great families, and all the sinful liberties they so obstinately indulged ? Where, wretches, where are now your jests and jollities, your haughty contempt of sobriety and religion, and every thing that is serious, your gaiety, and arrogance, and pride ? How great is the disproportion between so short a mirth, and so durable a sorrow, between so imperfect and unsincere a pleasure, and so exquisite misery and pain ? How dismal the fall, from that which you vainly thought your happiness, into torments insupportable, and ruin irreparable ? I beseech thee, now and then, my reader, whoever thou art, represent to thyself the horrors of this miserable change, which hath already been the fate of so many ; and reflect withal, that nothing hath happened to any one of these, which may not happen equally to thee. Thou too art man like them :

thy behaviour indeed may, but thy nature can make no difference: for thou art made of the same earth, livest upon the same products of it, and shall return to the same dust of it with them; nay, thou must return thither when that day overtakes thee, which suddenly will, and may perhaps be this very day. For, that thou shalt die, is certain beyond all dispute, but where, and how, and when, the most uncertain thing that can be. Since therefore death awaits thee every where, it will be wisdom in thee to be constantly upon thy guard, and to expect it every where too. If thou follow the flesh, thou shalt be punished in the flesh. If the delights of the body be thy aim, the torments of the body shall be the end of them. If thou affect fine clothes, and costly furniture, the moth shall be thy foot-cloth, and worms thy covering. For the justice of God, as it cannot but judge every man according to his deserts, so it will suit men's punishments to the inordinacy of their desires. And he that loves the world better than God, business and pleasure more than religion, high feeding more than moderation and abstinence, lasciviousness and luxury more than chastity and purity; this man follows the devil, and must look to eat the bitter fruit of his own choice, by being sentenced to keep him company in everlasting punishment.

But, oh the heart-breaking, the grief and amazement, the howlings and doleful lamentations of that dismal day, when the wicked shall be severed from the conversation of the saints, and for ever banished the sight and presence of God; when they shall be abandoned to the fury of devils, and fruitless tears and groans, and cast into the lake that flows in streams of fire for ever and ever! Such is the desperate condition of the damned, shut out irrevocably from the regions of bliss, to be tormented without mercy in hell; doomed

never to see the light, never to gain one minute's ease or respite, but to endure thousands of thousands of ages; at the hands of tormentors who shall never be weary, and in a state where the tormented shall never expire with their pains. For the fire so burns, as never entirely to consume; and the tortures are so inflicted, as to be ever new, ever increased. Nor will these be dealt promiscuously to all, but the quality of the punishment (we have reason to think) will be determined by the nature of each person's crimes; and they whose vices are of a sort, will find the same agreement in their sufferings. Weeping and wailing, howlings and groans, lamentations and gnashings, are the only sounds heard in those dismal prisons: worms, and ghosts, deformed and monstrous spectacles are all the objects presented to their eyes: their bodies shall burn in the fire, their souls be gnawed with the never-dying worm of an upbraiding conscience. Their pains intolerable, their fears unconceivably amazing, the stench suffocating beyond comparison, their soul and body ever dying, without the least glimpse of hope, or possibility of pardon and mercy. Thus must the soul be dealt with in the other world, capable of no middle state, but either tormented everlastingly in hell for sin unremitted, or inexpressibly happy in heaven for good works graciously accepted. And need we then to be persuaded which of these two we ought to choose, whether to be continually tormented with devils, or to be as continually in felicity with the saints? *good and evil, life and death are set before us, and whether we had rather, that shall be given us.* (Eccles. xv. 17.) The punishment indeed shall infinitely exceed all the descriptions, that have been here, or can be given of them: yet these descriptions sure are full of terror enough, to fright us into better manners. But if these terrors of the Lord

fail to persuade, let us try if the mercies and rewards will invite us to amendment.

CHAP. IV.

The Rewards of good Men in the next Life.

IT may suffice to say upon this occasion, that good men shall be recompensed for their labours by seeing God, by living with God, by living of God, being in him, who shall be all in all, and possessing him who is the supreme good: for where the supreme good is, there of necessity must be the most perfect happiness, the most exquisite joy, true liberty, unbounded charity, and eternal security, fulness of knowledge, perfection of beauty, and all manner of blessedness. There shall be peace and piety, joy and sweetness, life everlasting, glory and praise, rest and concord. So blessed shall every man be with God, who leaves this world with a quiet and clear conscience, and to *whom the Lord will not impute sin.* (Psal. xxxii. 2.) He shall see God to the satisfying his desire, he shall enjoy him to the consummating of his pleasure: he shall shine in truth; rejoice in goodness, flourish in a never-decaying eternity: nor shall his duration be more enlarged, than his capacity of knowledge and felicity. He shall be free of that city above, of which the angels are denizens, the Father the temple, the Son the light, the Holy Spirit the cement of inviolable love. O happy mansion! O fruitful, peaceful country, whose territories are large enough for all thy inhabitants! whose people dwell securely, without strife or want! *How glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God!* (Psal. lxxxvii. 3.) In thee is nothing heard but the voice of praise and thanksgiving, the shouts and exultations of them that rejoice in

God, whose sight is charming, whose words are sweet beyond expression. Thy presence, O Lord, is delightful: the possession of thee is entire satisfaction. Thou, thou alone art pleasant, thou art more than a sufficient reward; the highest merit, the sharpest sufferings, are overpaid in thee. Beyond thee there remains no new object for our wishes; for all that we can possibly propose to ourselves, is found in thee alone. The desires of beholding and possessing thee will be ever fresh and growing, and the delights of these ever new and entertaining. In thee our understandings will be enlightened, in thee our affections ever purified, so as to know and love the truth continually more and more. And this is the utmost perfection mankind are capable of, to know, and entirely to love their Creator.

What strange perverseness! What madness and dotage then is this we labour under, to thirst after the gall and wormwood of sin, to court the storms and shipwreck of worldly cares, to be content with the disasters of a perishing life, to submit tamely to the tyranny of an enemy that usurps a dominion over us; and not rather to aim at the bliss of saints, the society of angels, the magnificent joys above, and the pleasures of a devout and contemplative life, that so we may enter into the joy of our Lord, and be made partakers of the riches of his exceeding goodness? There we shall taste how gracious the Lord is, see the beauties of his holiness, the lustre of his saints, and the glories of his palace and throne: there we shall know the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, the most extensive love of the Holy Ghost; and get acquainted with that ever blessed and most mysterious Trinity. Now we see bodies with the eyes of our body; we form ideas of bodies by the powers of the soul; but then we shall see God himself with a clear

intuitive knowledge. O the blessedness perpetually flowing from that vision, which sees God in himself, sees him in us, and us in him; which furnishes us with the utmost we can wish, and leaves no new objects for our desires; which shews us all we can see, and inflames us with the love of all we see, and renders us perfectly happy in that love. So shall we be blessed in the pleasures of love, blessed in the delights of contemplation. This shall be the sum of our contemplation, that the sum of our happiness. For the Divine nature shall then be understood by us in its abstracted essence and brightest perfections; the secrets and mysteries of the Trinity, and the harmony of providence, and the justice of his judgments, and all the wondrous works of God, shall lie fair and open to our view. The delights resulting from them, shall fill and satisfy our largest thirst after knowledge, and so consummate the happiness of the rational soul. And as truth shall shine, so charity shall burn bright; one voice, one will, one concert of praise: the whole assembly of saints united to each other; body and soul shall no more war and hold perpetual conflicts; nor then, as here, obstruct, but promote each other's happiness, and maintain good correspondence, and the human nature shall shine in glory, as the sun in its strength. The joy, the discourse, the entertainment of angels and men shall then be the same. Their love shall never grow cold, their hopes and expectations shall never languish by delays; for in God all good shall be present with them, and they shall all partake in common of the same wisdom, and power, and righteousness, and peace. No difference of language shall there be heard, but all things uniform, and hearts unanimous; the same dispositions and the same affections: in the overflowing river of this pleasure, there will be gratification to the full, the perfection of bliss, and glory, and gladness.

But who is sufficient, who shall be meet to partake of these things? Even every true penitent, even every faithful friend, even every obedient servant. The true penitent grieves and mourns for his past miscarriages, and gives all diligence to avoid the like for the time to come. For this is repentance indeed, to be continually under concern for the sins we have committed heretofore; and so to bewail what hath been done, as never more to do what we bewail. And reason tells us, that he who persists in practices, which he professes to be sorry for having ever been engaged in, does not repent, but mock God, and delude his own soul. If then thou wouldest approve thy sincerity in this matter, leave off thy sins; for vain is that repentance which subsequent crimes of the same nature stain. Every obedient servant resigns his own inclinations and aversions to his master's pleasure, so as to be able to profess with the psalmist, *My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready, I am content, and delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.* I delight to dedicate my time to thee, to converse with thee in my prayer, to do good to my neighbours, and perform all offices of charity for thy sake; to keep a strict guard over myself, and to seek rest for my soul in the contemplation of heavenly things. A faithful friend is serviceable and obliging to all, and troublesome to none. He is serviceable to all, because devout towards God, kind to his brethren, reserved and moderate in his enjoyments, a servant to his Lord, a companion to his equal, a master of the world. The things above him minister to his delight; those upon the level with him, to his comfort and assistance; those below him, to his use and service. He is troublesome to nobody, because using and esteeming all things according to their proper spheres and capacities;

pursuing and reaching to those that are more excellent, and retaining an absolute mastery over those that are beneath him. To the former he gives up himself in possession, but keeps undisturbed possession of the latter; and thus employs himself in those two most important, most necessary affairs, the contemplation of God, and the preservation of his own soul.

Let this then be thy first care, strictly to watch and guard thyself from sin and temptation; but know withal, that thy own strength is not sufficient for this great work; and therefore do not forget most humbly and earnestly to implore the Divine mercy and protection: let thy Saviour Jesus Christ be ever in thy thoughts and affections, and wear him as a signet upon thy heart: for when the door is sealed and kept by him, all thy faculties will be under his governance; no thought can go in or out, or lodge there, but by his permission: the family of heaven and earth will bear thee company; thousands of angels will pitch their tents about thee, and guard the passes of thy outward senses, that no unclean thing enter there. And the great adversary of souls, how mighty and formidable soever in himself, will not be able to break through these bright armies, nor dare to make his attacks which he foresees will prove unsuccessful. So great an awe will the dread of this Divine keeper, and the bright host of angels that attend him, strike; so sure a defence will these heavenly succours be, against that otherwise undaunted, that otherwise invincible enemy.

CHAP. V.

Of the Duty of Self-Examination.

SOUND thy heart to the bottom, and try it nicely, to be thoroughly satisfied of thy sincerity. Let no day pass without an account taken

of thy life, and be sure to observe very diligently what ground you get or lose; what alteration appears in your temper, behaviour, affections, desires; what resemblance or degeneracy from God: how near approaches you make, or to what distance you are cast; a distance and approach to be measured not by extension and space, but by actions and dispositions. Above all other subjects, study your own self; for he who is thoroughly acquainted with himself, hath attained to a more valuable sort of learning, laid out his pains and time to much better purpose, than if the course and position of the stars, the virtues of plants, the different complexions of men, the nature of all sorts of animals; in short, than if the comprehension of celestial and terrestrial bodies, and their qualities, had employed his thoughts. For no knowledge which terminates in curiosity and speculation, is comparable to that which is of use; and of all useful knowledge, that is most so, which consists in the due care and just notions of ourselves. This study is a debt which every one owes himself. Let us not then be so lavish, so unjust, as not to pay this debt, by spending some part at least, if we cannot all, or most of our time and care, upon that which hath the first and most indefeasible claim to it. Govern your passions, manage your actions with prudence; and where false steps have been made, correct them for the future. Let nothing be allowed to grow headstrong and disorderly, but bring all under discipline. Set all your faults before your own eyes, and pass sentence upon yourself with the same severity that you would do upon any other, for whom no partiality hath biassed your judgment. When this is done, seriously lament your transgressions; open your guilt and grief before God! shew him the troubles of a wounded conscience, and the malice of them that lie in wait

for your soul. And when you mortify yourself and melt away in tears of contrition before him, extend your charity to your fellow Christians, and let me, in return for this good advice, be particularly remembered in your prayers.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Attention requisite in public Devotion.

WHEN thou enterest the church to join in the public worship, be sure to leave all the hurry of wandering and tumultuous thoughts behind thee, abandon business and care of all sorts, that thou mayest be distracted by no intruding object, but fix thy mind entirely upon God. For how is it possible that a man should converse with his Maker, who is all the while secretly entertaining himself with the world? Let then thy meditations be confined to Him, whose observing eye is placed constantly upon thee; and listen attentively when he speaks to thee, that his ears may likewise be open when thou addressest to him. In this case you will find the several parts of Divine worship mutually contributing to the improvement of each other: for the man that bears his part in the praises and prayers, with all that thankfulness and humility, that reverence and earnest zeal which become such holy exercises, will find himself much better disposed to receive and profit by those instructions, which the portions of scripture then read are designed to furnish him with; and every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, will then have its due weight and efficacy upon the hearer. Perhaps you may object, that this is a pitch of devotion which I myself, who enjoin it, have not yet arrived to: but I beg my reader to consider, that my practice neither is, nor ought to be esteemed the rule of his. I either

do it; or, if I do it not, I am sensible I should, I heartily wish I could do it, and am sorry and ashamed when I feel myself defective. But let not this hinder thee, or any other person who is endued with more liberal measures of grace, from inclining the merciful ears of God, by the most fervent devotion that man is capable of. Pour out thy prayers, and to those prayers add sighs, and tears, and inward groanings; all are little enough for those transgressions, which thou prostratest thyself before the throne of grace to implore the pardon of. And when praise is thy theme, raise up thy soul, and endeavour to magnify God in all his works, by psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs: O then exert the utmost of thy strength, for thou canst never exalt his goodness as it deserves. No sight is more agreeable to the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem; no tribute more acceptable to the great King that reigns there, than such a pious zeal. So his own mouth pronounced long ago by his prophet; *Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me.* (Psal. l. 23.) O how happy wouldst thou most justly think thyself, couldst thou but see with the eyes of thy mind those solemn rejoicings above, wherein is the mystical and most magnificent sense of the psalmist's description, *the princes go before, the instruments follow after; in the midst are the damsels playing with their timbrels.* (Psal. lxxviii. 25.) Then wouldest thou plainly discover, and be abundantly convinced, though now there is little appearance of thy believing it, that there are numbers of those bright spirits which do with wondrous watchfulness and satisfaction, rejoice with the congregations of good Christians in their praises; and observe their behaviour and their prayers; and are present with their pious meditations; and keep guard about them in their sleep and solitude; and direct and preserve the governors

of our church in the exercise of their spiritual authority and function. For this is sure, that the heavenly powers have a very tender regard for the fellow-citizens upon earth, and being all *ministering spirits sent out to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation*; (Heb. i. 14.) we have no cause to doubt, that they are very solicitously concerned for the good of their charge; that they conceive a sensible joy at it; that they strengthen, instruct, protect, and take all the care they can of them, in order to obtaining it. In doing so, indeed, they study to promote not our happiness only, but their own: for they long earnestly for our safe arrival in those blissful regions, as hoping to see the breaches made upon their glorious society repaired, and the numbers of their fallen brethren recruited, by the succession of redeemed souls into their place. They make diligent inquiry, and delight to hear of good men; they fly upon dispatches between God and us; and are the messengers and instruments by which our requests and holy sighs are carried up to God, and the graces and blessings he gives in return to those prayers and complaints, are conveyed down to us. And they, who now are appointed our ministers and messengers, and do with so much diligence and alacrity discharge that office, will not disdain, in our exalted state, to be our brethren and companions. We poured in an addition to their joy, when we repented of our sins; and therefore we should think ourselves concerned to increase yet more, and to complete that joy, which they entertained at our conversion; by so proceeding in virtue, as finally to attain everlasting salvation.

This is our duty and our interest. But miserable dost thou make thyself, whoever thou art, wicked creature, that *returnest with the dog to thy vomit* again, and *with the sow that was washed to her*

wallowing in the mire. (2 Pet. ii. 22.) What favour canst thou expect in the day of judgment, who hast thus disappointed all heaven of a joy so greatly desired, and which thou once hadst given so promising hopes of? The angels triumphed in our serious application to goodness and religious duties, as over men whom they saw plucked back from the very brink of hell: but how different resentments shall we provoke in them, by relapsing into our once abhorred and forsaken abominations, which is in effect to fall back from the very gate of paradise, and to sink into hell, after having, as it were, already one foot in heaven? For this is the condition of them whose hearts and affections are placed above, though their bodies are still detained below. Let us run therefore the race that is set before us, by pressing forward to the mark continually, not with our bodies, but our inclinations and desires. And let this consideration prevail with us to quicken our pace, and hold out to the last, that not only the angels, but the common Maker and Father of angels and men, expects and longs to see us at the goal. God the Father longs for us as his children and heirs, that he may crown, and make us rulers over all that he hath. God the Son expects us as brethren and joint heirs with himself, that he may present to God the Father, the fruits of his marvellous condescension, in taking our flesh upon him; and secure the purchase, for which he paid down his own blood. God the Holy Ghost waits for us; for he is the very essence of kindness and love, by which good men are predestinated from all eternity; and he cannot doubtless but be well pleased to see that gracious decree accomplished in such men's happiness. Since therefore the whole court of heaven so solicitously expect, so eagerly desire our blessedness, let it not be our reproach, that we are careless and indifferent in

so weighty a point, but let us at least desire and endeavour our own happiness with all the zeal and earnestness we are capable of. I say, let it not be our reproach to do otherwise; for should we be admitted thither, it could not but confound us to reflect, that we were cold in the pursuit of that inestimable bliss, and how far short of what they ought to have been our desires after it were. But he that makes this the constant subject of his meditations, that prays without ceasing, and strives without laziness or intermission, will go securely out of this world, and be received in the next with joy and satisfaction unspeakable. Therefore, wherever thou art, pray at least secretly, and within thyself. If thou hast not the convenience of religious assemblies, and the house of God, be not concerned for want of a proper place, for every good man's heart is the temple of God, and his house of prayer. Be thou in bed, abroad in thy fields, at home in thy closet, the place makes no difference; thy prayers will consecrate and make it an habitation of God's Spirit and gracious presence. We have great need of frequent prayer, and shall do well to perform it in the most decent manner: for the more lowly posture our bodies are bowed down in, the higher and more reverend will our thoughts be. And sure as there is not any moment in our lives, which hath not been distinguished by some fresh instance of mercy and goodness, so it is not fit there should be any neither, in which we should not have God in remembrance. But you will say, perhaps, I say my prayers every day, and yet I see nothing come of it; but I return from my closet, or from church, just the same I went in: none answers to my call; none speaks comfort to me; my requests are not granted, but I seem to have taken all this pains to no manner of purpose. This is a common, but withal a very

foolish objection, and proceeds from the ignorance or the impatience of those that allege it. These people do not duly observe the import of that promise which truth itself hath left us, *Verily I say unto you, what things soever ye ask when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* (Mark xi. 24.) Do not therefore despise prayer, as if it were a thing of no benefit and consequence; for He to whom thou prayest, makes great account of it; and there is not a word thou speakest, but even before it is well out of thy mouth, he orders it to be written in his book. One of these two things we ought to depend upon, and should be possessed with the most assured persuasion of, that God will always give us either the very thing we ask, or in its stead somewhat else, which his wisdom knows better for us. Let therefore thy thoughts of God be the noblest and most honourable, but those of thyself the meanest and most humble that possibly they can. Thou canst not err in either of these extremities. Thou oughtest to believe much more greatly of God, than it is in the power of any finite mind to conceive: and all those intervals of time which the thoughts of him do not employ, should be looked upon as so many empty and insignificant spaces of thy life; a blank, which adds nothing to the main account. And hence it is that we are so particularly concerned to make good use of time, because all other things are remote from us, and not in our power. They are talents sometimes lent, and sometimes called in again by our Master and Creditor; but time is always with us, and at our own disposal. Therefore be sure to preserve this to yourself, and wherever you are, let not any business or diversion deprive you of leisure to serve God and your own soul. Some part indeed of your time, the affairs of this life, and necessary recreations will of necessity devour;

but be not too profuse upon these: remember that there ought to be a difference between lending yourself to them for a little while, and wholly laying yourself out upon them. Nor even are these necessary avocations so importunate, but with good management the matter may be so ordered, as to leave room for pious thoughts to come in betwixt, and for keeping such reflections, as tend to the everlasting good of the soul, always uppermost there. No place, no time, no business can make these unseasonable. And therefore be sure to preserve such a mastery over yourself, that you may retire into your own breast at any time, and find great satisfaction in doing so. Your heart is wide, and will afford you much variety; and pleasure you cannot want, if Christ your spouse hath taken up his lodging in it. And thus as it is with every wise and good man, so it should be with every man: for ought we not always to set him before our eyes, by whom it is that we are, and live, and think at all? We could not have had any existence, had we not derived it from him, the author and first cause of it. We could not think to any purpose, were not he our instructor and director. We could not be happy in any degree, were not the blessing imparted to us by the giver of every good and perfect gift. And in these respects it is that we come to be sensible of our resemblance to the glorious and ever-blessed Trinity. For as God, three in one, exists, and is wisdom and goodness in the abstract and perfection; so we likewise exist and know we do so, and love that existence and that knowledge in ourselves, according to our proportion and capacity.

Let then that image of God, which is in thee, awaken and preserve such respect for thy person as is due to a temple of his. Now the greatest honour we are in a condition of paying God, is

by our worship and our imitation. Every pious heavenly-minded man is an imitator of God: for a devout mind is a house consecrated to his service, and a pure heart is the altar that sanctifies every gift. Thou payest him worship and reverence, if thou art merciful, as thy Father which is in heaven is merciful: for the apostle hath declared, that *distributing and doing good*, for God's sake, are *sacrifices with which he is particularly well-pleased*. (Heb. xiii. 16.) In all things demean thyself as a child of God, that thou mayest not be a reproach to that sonship, which he in wonderful mercy hath adopted thee to. And in all thou dost, be sure to consider, and act, as becomes a man sensible that God is always by thee, and with thee. Take good heed, then, not only to thy outward senses, but even to thy most secret imaginations; for he sees and observes the one no less than the other; that neither of them engage thee in any unlawful or impure pleasure. And how strong soever thy inclination may be, yet suffer not thy tongue to speak, or thy hands to act any evil thing; but guard thyself from giving any offence to God, and driving him away from thee. Great caution is needful in this case; for who can be too circumspect, that lives and acts under the watchful eyes of an all-seeing Judge? But though this reflection may be a terror to the wicked, yet it is the comfort and security of every good Christian, who so purifies his heart, and disposes his behaviour, as to render his breast a delightful dwelling to the Most High. With every one of us, in some sense, God cannot but be. The presence of justice succeeds into the place of the presence of his grace, when he forsakes the loathsome dwelling of a polluted heart. But woe to them who feel the presence of his justice; and yet we may denounce a woe to them who sometimes feel it not: for then God is angry

indeed, when he suffers us to sin without making us to smart for it. Wickedness never goes unpunished, and they whom his rod does not correct in this world, are reserved to his vengeance and hell-fire in the next.

CHAP. VII.

MOST certain it is, that death threatens thee every where, and the devil is perpetually laying snares to devour thy soul; but then especially will he lie in wait for this prey, when it take its flight out of the body. But be not thou afraid for ten thousand of thy enemies, that set themselves against thee round about; for God, who dwelleth in thee, (if he do indeed dwell in thee by the Spirit of his grace) will not fail to deliver thee both from death and the devil. He is a sure friend, and never forsakes them that trust in him, except he be first forsaken by them. And forsaken he is, when the heart wanders about and loses itself in idle, and vicious, and fruitless imaginations. Therefore above all keepings, keep thy soul, that God may set up his rest there with pleasure. For among all the creatures, the most exalted and noblest, and most God-like of any, that are exposed to the vanities of this sublunary world, is the heart of man. Hence it is that God requires nothing of thee but thy heart. Purge it therefore from uncleanness by godly sorrow and frequent prayer; that thou, by thus continually keeping God in view, mayest be qualified for that blessing of seeing him, which belongs only to the *pure in heart*. (Matt. v. 8.) Let thy thoughts be constantly fixed upon him, and all thy behaviour so regular and composed, as to speak a profound deference for, and subjection to him. Preserve thy temper from being ruffled by passions of any

sort; love all men, and deserve that all may love thee, by courteous and obliging behaviour, by being a *peace-maker*, in this respect more peculiarly *a child of God*. (Matt. v. 9.) So shalt thou be a good Christian, holy, humble, upright; this will make thee one of those whose prayers are acceptable with God; and when thine are so, let me, the meanest of thy brethren, be recommended in them.

Alas! I give advice to others, which I do not follow myself, nor not so strictly, or not so constantly as I ought. These good instructions are in my head and pen; but not in my heart and life. O that my actions and my manners, and not my words only, contained and published them! How absurd a thing is it for me to have the law of God all day long in my thoughts and in my mouth, and yet be doing things which are contrary to the law? I read much there of the advantages of devotion and retirement; and I am much fonder of reading than I am of praying. And yet the substance of the holy scripture is reduced at last to this short lesson, of delighting in God, loving and doing good to my brethren, and preserving unity. But instead of drawing these rules into practice, I am still for poring upon them, and prefer an hour in my study, before one at church. Some friend or neighbour would gladly open his case to me, and desire my assistance; he waits my coming with impatience; and I, instead of answering his expectation, take up a book, and entertain myself with that. But all the knowledge, thus acquired, makes a very poor amends for the loss of that advantage which my doing an office of charity would have insured me. Thus by turning religion into empty speculation, I feel none of those tender and warm refreshments of mind, those bowels of pity, that largeness of heart, those inward compunctions of sin, and the

sensible, the transporting pleasures of prayer and heavenly contemplations. And yet, how little soever the mistaken and vitiated palates of the world may relish those things, there is not in this life any delight so sweet, any which the mind more greedily catches at, any that so effectually exalts us above the dross of, and dotage for this world and its vanities; any so strong a defence against temptations, any so powerful promoter of all manner of virtue and goodness, nor so indefatigable sustainer of labour and difficulty, as the grace of fervent prayer, and devout contemplation.

CHAP. VIII.

Of wandering Thoughts in Prayer.

HAVE mercy upon me, O God, and assist me against myself; for such is my infirmity, that there especially do I fall into sin, where my obligations and endeavours are most indispensable to avoid and reform it. I am ashamed to think how often I pray, and all the while regard not what I speak. Thus do I pray with the mouth, but not with the spirit; for while my mind is rambling, my tongue runs over empty forms. My body indeed is in the closet of the church, but my heart is at a distance, in the play-house, at the exchange, in a hundred other places; and then what wonder, if all I say be lost and fruitless? For what can it possibly signify for the voice to perform its part never so punctually, if the mind in the meanwhile give no manner of attention? And can there be any greater perverseness, greater insolence, greater madness, than to turn the deaf ear, and run after trifles and impertinences, when we take upon us to converse with the Majesty of heaven and earth in prayer? can

there on the other hand be any thing more senseless, more provoking, than for vile earth and ashes to behave itself negligently, and not to think the great Creator of the universe worth listening to, when he vouchsafes to speak to us by his scriptures and his ministers? But especially, can any thing compare with that unwearied patience and forbearance, that mercy and condescension of a gracious and forgiving God, which sees such wretches every day turning the deaf ear, *refusing the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely*, hardening their hearts, and regardless of their own duty and advantage, and yet instead of taking speedy vengeance, repeats his kind invitations, and cries aloud, *O ye simple ones, how long will ye love simplicity, and scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge?* (Prov. i. 22, 23.) Turn ye at my reproof, consider your ways and be wise. *Be still, and commune with your own hearts, and know that I am God.* (Psal. iv. 4.)

God speaks to me, and I to him in a psalm; and yet so great is my stupidity, that I often repeat the words without ever regarding the subject and the sense, the author or design of it. And can I be guilty of a greater disrespect, a more manifest injury to Almighty God, than when I beseech him to hear those prayers which I myself who make them, do not attend to, nor know what goes out of my mouth at the very instant of pronouncing? I expect God should have a particular regard to me, while I have none at all either to him or to myself: nay, can I hope for any benefit while I do which is worse; while I bring into his presence a heart full of vain and loose, impure and sinful thoughts, and so offend his sight with corruption and filth, which is not indeed a heart, but the loathsome stinking carcase of a heart.

CHAP. IX.

The Fickleness of Man's Heart.

NOTHING can be more restless and fleeting, no part of my nature is so perpetually changing as my heart: every time it gives me the slip, and lets itself loose to unprofitable and wicked thoughts, it does certainly break off from God, and transgress its duty to him. And how exceeding vain and trifling, how wandering and unsettled is this strolling vagabond; never fixing, while following its own will, and not steering by the guidance and counsel of God? For its self is a perpetual motion, without any principle of rest from within; and therefore it outstrips the swiftest bodies, is under a thousand different determinations at once, and flies about in quest of objects innumerable. It makes experiments, but to no purpose; seeks rest every where, but finds it no where; is sure of labour and disappointment, and all the misery these can bring; but happiness flies from it, and its pursuits have never their hoped-for end. It is not so much as consistent with itself, but disagrees and flies off from its own proposals; changes its inclinations and aversions, loves and hates, dislikes old, and takes new measures: starts fresh projects, sets up and pulls down, and runs the race over and over again; turns things this way, and that way, and every way; and all this from its own mercurial nature, that can lie still no where, but must be always in action, though it act in contradiction to itself. This is what I have often represented to myself by a wind-mill, which whirls about apace, and takes all you put into it, grinds all you pour; but if you pour in nothing, still it goes; and, for want of other materials to employ it, sets itself on

fire. Just thus my heart is always at work, asleep or awake it stands not; but either by dreams, or by such waking thoughts as oftentimes are very little better, it is still under sail, and nothing comes amiss to it. Again, as sand and stones, if put into the mill, break it, pitch or dirt foul it, chaff choaks it up; so is it with this heart of mine. Afflicting thoughts disturb it, unclean pollute it, idle and unprofitable ones tire and harass it. And thus it will be, while it neglects spiritual and future good, and does not observe the law of God for its rule, and attain his assistance for its support: all its confusion grows, in proportion as it is more estranged from the love of heavenly things, and entangled with the bewitching, but always empty and treacherous objects here below.

Now when the soul falls from those worthy and is bewildered in these sordid affections, vanity seizes it, curiosity distracts it, covetous desires allure it, pleasure seduces it, luxury defiles it, envy racks it, anger ruffles it, grief afflicts and depresses it; and thus, obnoxious to every kind of misery, it is overwhelmed and sunk in all manner of vice; and all, because it forsook God, which singly was the good large enough to answer all its wants and wishes. The mind is dissipated and scattered among a multitude of trifles; and, though it anxiously seek for satisfaction, can yet attain to none, till it return to that one all-sufficient object. It roves from thought to thought, tumbles about like a feverish man, and tries to find that ease from variety, which the quality and intrinsic value of the things themselves is not able to furnish. Thus miserably does the heart of man fall, till it become even misery in the abstract; for such it is, when abandoned to its own folly, and deprived of the direction and assistance of Divine grace. But when it returns and retires

into itself, and comes nicely to examine what are the fruits of all its past solicitude, it finds itself deluded, and nothing remaining in hand ; because the whole result of all this care is no real substance, but only an anxious thought, a fantastical airy notion, that compounds an imaginary being, out of wild ideas of its own forming : and thus men are deceived by an empty phantom, which the devil and his temptations industriously dressed up, that its false beauties might be qualified effectually to cheat them into ruin. My God commands me to give him my heart, and my disobedience to his command renders me at the same time a rebel to my own best reason : for the conditions of my duty are so ordered, that I cannot live in subjection to myself, but by living in subjection to him ; and all I do in compliance with my own mind comes hard and strained, and goes against the grain, because I have not got the mastery of my own heart so as to serve God willingly and cheerfully. The neglecting to fix my heart upon its proper business, is the occasion that it lays more plots in one single minute, than all mankind are able to accomplish in multitudes of years. So long as I am not united with God, I am divided in, and at perpetual strife with myself. Now this union with God can only be secured by charity, this subjection to him must be grounded in humility, and that humility again must be the result of my knowing and believing the truth, and having right notions of God and myself.

Highly necessary, therefore, and of great use it is that I inquire diligently, and discover the true state of my soul, that I be truly sensible, how vile, how frail, how liable to change and corruption I am. Then, having found the extreme sinfulness and misery of my nature, my next care must be to lay hold upon, and hold fast by him, from whom I derive my being, without whom I

neither am any thing, nor able to do any thing. And because it is by sin I have departed from my God, the way to come back to him again must needs be by true confession and repentance of those sins which have set me at so wide a distance from him. In the confession of our faults, we should proceed with all possible sincerity and diligence, and act without any private reserves. A thing too seldom done; for how few are there, who, when they declare the facts committed, lay open all the circumstances, all the wicked means and ends by which their guilt was aggravated? Nay, how unusual is it punctually to confess the very facts, some of which time and negligence have worn out all impression of; or if not so, yet when we look back, the number appears so great, that we content ourselves with general terms, and think it endless to descend to particulars. Again, in our confessions, how little are we touched with an abhorrence of that turpitude and baseness, which ought to be the most powerful, but is commonly the weakest motive to that shame and remorse we feel upon the account of our sins? If we call in the advice of our guides, and open our case to a spiritual physician, how do we mangle and disguise our confessions, revealing one part to one, another to another, relating things imperfectly, shewing them in false lights, and contriving not so much to inform, as to keep them in ignorance, what sort of persons we really have been? This is the reason that so little benefit is received from their ghostly counsels and comforts, because we dissemble the matter; and when they speak peace, our own conscience can upbraid us with hypocrisy, and tell us, that those absolutions do not of right belong to us which we have obtained purely by our own fraudulent management, and concealing the blackest and most dangerous part of our crimes. For we are not to suppose,

that any confession will do us service, except it be attended with truth and simplicity of heart; nor will the releases given by God's ministers upon earth, avail the sinner for pardon, any farther, than as the case represented to those servants and officers, agrees with that state of it, which lies before their all-seeing Master in heaven.

But to all this perhaps may be objected, what need of any application at all to these spiritual guides, or why should our offences be told to any man, since God alone can pardon them, and what men do will stand us in no stead, till it be ratified in the court above? To all this, take not mine, but the apostle's answer, *Confess your sins to one another, and pray one for another.* "Some offences are not only against God, but against our brethren too, and sure ought to be acknowledged to the injured party, in order to satisfaction and reconciliation. Others may be imparted profitably; either for advice in doubtful and difficult cases, where partiality or want of skill may incapacitate us for making a right judgment of our distemper, or its proper remedies; or else, to engage the assistance and intercession of our friends; on all which and some other accounts, it may be very convenient, if not absolutely necessary, to disclose our sins to God's priests, who are qualified to be faithful and wise counsellors, fervent and powerful intercessors for us. And well it were, if men, who have been proudly and obstinately rebellious against God, would exercise this discipline upon themselves, and undergo the humiliation of acknowledging their own vileness to his ministers. Well, if they would take this method of having their condition and their concern for it particularly recommended in the affectionate prayers of those whom their function obliges to be the most tender lovers of souls;

this might have excellent effects, both in increasing their own compunction, and in disposing God to pity it: and as this taking of shame upon ourselves might facilitate the cure of what is past, so would it doubtless be a mighty check to men, where secrecy is a prevailing temptation, and render them more circumspect for the time to come. This is what all serious and considerate persons must allow to be highly expedient, though it be not indispensably necessary: for where the heart is duly humbled, the sin sufficiently lamented, the man effectually reformed, we have no reason to believe, that God will not accept the performance of that work upon confession to himself alone; in which our confessing to men can be no farther serviceable, than only as it is a probable means of having it performed more effectually, than (ordinarily speaking) it was like to have been without such confession."

CHAP. X.

Of excusing our Faults.

HOW often, when I have set myself to make an entire confession of my faults, have I added to their number and guilt, instead of purging and amending them? How often, when any of them were charged upon me, have I either falsely disowned them, or cunningly shifted them off, or softened and disguised them by artificial colours and plausible extenuations? Nay, which is worse than all these, how often have I abandoned all modesty and shame, and impudently defended what I ought to have blushed for; and been enraged beyond all patience to be charged with those things, which my own conscience told me all the while were very just accusations? And indeed what accusations are not just? For sure

there is no sort of wickedness, but I either actually have been, or, had I been left to my own corrupt inclinations, should most certainly have been polluted with it. And therefore it is fit that in a due sense of my abominations, and an humble reflection upon all the rest which I was naturally disposed to, I should lay my hand upon my mouth, bewail my grievous transgressions, and the misery and wrath they have most justly exposed me to; seriously intend and promise a thorough reformation; take sanctuary in no trifling pretences or extenuating shifts; submit to think as ill of myself as I deserve, and patiently take the reproofs and admonitions of others; in a word, so demean myself with regard to past faults, that they may not rise up any more against me, and for the future avoid offending with all possible diligence: for if *I thus judge and condemn myself, I shall not be condemned of the Lord*, (1 Cor. xi. 81.)

CHAP. XI.

A further Confession of Sins.

MY transgressions have contributed to the destruction not of myself alone, but of many besides: for, being conscious to myself how heinous and numerous my own crimes have been, I feel a secret shame and fear, which restrains me from reproving others when they do amiss. And thus I become accessary to the death of their souls too, by tamely suffering that poison to spread, the malignity whereof might be expelled by timely warning or sharp reprehensions. I take it ill of them who rebuke me for my faults, and hate them whom this friendly office should have taught me to prefer before those false pretenders to friendship, whose treacherous complaisance

chooses to see me eternally undone, rather than to save me from hell, by this most profitable, but distasteful piece of service. When any thing created me uneasiness, my impatience hath tempted me to wish that it might cease to be, or that it never had been at all; and yet upon recollection, I could not but acknowledge, that he who made every thing is good, and that every thing he made is very good in its own nature; and consequently, if it proved evil to me in the event, or the effects of it, the only reason must be, that I myself was evil, and wanted the grace and prudence to make a right use of it: for, after all, nothing can work me mischief except myself. The harm that I sustain, I carry about with me, and never am a real sufferer but by my own fault. I have been so extravagant as to wish, that God might want either the will or power to take vengeance on my sins; which what is it in truth but to desire, that he were defective in his most essential excellence, his wisdom and knowledge, his justice and omnipotence? And yet supposing him to be so, he must at the same time cease to be God. No pride was more excessive than mine, which above all other vices renders salvation hazardous. For God always looks upon this disposition with a very jealous eye; he cannot away with it, nor be reconciled to it. He dwells with the contrite and humble; but the same indignation which would not endure pride in the same heaven with itself, makes him disdain to dwell by his grace in the same breast with it. 'Tis true, this vice was born and first appeared in heaven; but, as if by some strange infatuation it had forgot the way by which it fell thence, it never could get up thither again. When the weather is foul, or extremely cold or hot, I have been so wicked and unreasonable as to repine and murmur against Providence. So dexterous

are we grown in wickedness, as to turn those things into occasions and improvements of our sins, which the bounty of that Providence sends us for the conveniences of life. And since we thus contrive to make every thing contribute to our wickedness, it is but just in God so to order the matter, that nothing should be incapable of becoming instrumental to our punishment. In the performance of my public devotions, I have often put my voice to the stretch, and been more solicitous for a pathetical delivery, or a musical cadence, than for the fervency and inward zeal of my heart. But God, who is privy to the most secret thoughts, is not to be imposed upon by shews and sounds; he looks not at the agreeableness of the voice, but the purity and pious disposition of the soul. And too often it happens, that he who charms the people with the sweetness of his tone, does but grate the ears of God, and provoke him by the perverseness of his temper and behaviour.

How often hath my importunity extorted from my friends, or spiritual guides, leave to indulge myself in some particular liberty, which they thought inconvenient? Not considering (fool that I am!) that he does but deceive himself, who takes pains to work his advisers up to a compliance with his own inclinations, in opposition to their own impartial and better sense. I have allowed myself in coveting, or indirectly procuring things of small value; and flattered my conscience with an idle fancy that the sin was not worth repenting of, because the price of what I got was inconsiderable: and yet the reason of the thing convinces me, that the obliquity of any action is to be measured, not by the value of the advantage I propose from it, but the pravity of the corrupt affection, which pursues that advantage inordinately. For he *that is unfaithful in little, will*

also be unfaithful in much? (Luke xvi. 10.) and it is not the object, but the desire, and the undue methods of obtaining it, that constitute the essence of the sin. When I was employed in business, I have not taken all the pains I might or ought to have done. When I enjoyed leisure and retirement, I have been perfectly thoughtless, and this is certainly a great offence, to neglect the improvement of such happy opportunities. For no man ought so to sequester himself from the world, as not to make his solitude turn to some good account for the benefit of others: nor should any be so deeply engaged in the business of the world, as not to leave room for God and heavenly contemplations. And he is but a very indifferent proficient who does not always consult and promote the good of others, when it lies in his power. I have been often guilty of that worst and most wicked of all vanities, the boasting of my sins: fondly imagining that to be my glory, which was in truth my shame and fault. Nay, so falsely have I imagined, as even to turn my virtues into vices. For justice, when it exceeds on the rigorous side, degenerates into cruelty; and excess of piety and good nature encourages offenders by too great an easiness, and relaxation of that discipline, which should constrain them to better manners: and thus it often happens, that what men value as an excellence, is really a vice, and a great defect. Thus sloth and a tame insensibility, passes for a quiet spirit and meekness of disposition. I have pretended to be what I was not, profest to desire what I secretly hated or feared, and to dread and refuse what I passionately desired: my tongue and my heart were often very distant, and I have acted the fox under sheep's clothing: for what are the qualities of a dissembling fox, if these that follow be not? A lukewarm behaviour, a sensual mind, counterfeit

confessions of sin, fits of remorse that last but a little while, and return but very seldom; obedience without cheerfulness, prayer without devotion, reading without edification, talk without mature consideration?

O how harsh and cutting are any reflections of this kind to me, because I am conscious that all the edge of them is turned upon my own soul? But though this be my wretched case, yet, in regard I do not disown or cover my faults, but with all humility and sorrow confess myself a most vile, miserable sinner; some hope there is, that with my righteous and merciful Judge, the acknowledgment of my offences may prevail for a pardon. I will therefore pour out my complaint before him, and declare the worst of my condition, that so, if it be possible, his bowels may relent and yearn over one lost, unworthy of compassion, upon any other account, than only as extremity of misery can recommend me to it. There shall not a sin be left uninquied after, or concealed when found; for the first step towards heaven is to see and lament the near approaches we have made to hell. I have gone on in great security, as if those outward appearances of religion, which the station I am in obliges me to, would do the business. But, alas! these are a deceitful trial; the outside may look fair and promise well; but woe to him who trusts to that, without attending to the rottenness within, and the worm that gnaws at his heart-strings. To such circumstances we may apply that of Hosea, *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth not; yea, grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not.* (Hos. vii. 9.) Thus I, like Ephraim heretofore, fixing my thoughts and care wholly upon the things that are without, and ignorant and unconcerned how matters stand within, am poured out like water, and become altogether unprofitable

and vain. The past I forget, the present I disregard, and the future I make no provision for. The mercies and benefits I receive I am unthankful for, the temptations to evil I feel a wondrous forwardness to comply with; but the motions and persuasions to any thing that is good, make slight impressions, and find me slow and heavy.

CHAP. XII.

THIS duty of self-examination, which I am now upon, I find at once a plain necessity for, and yet a mighty discouragement from: for, if I do not nicely look into my soul, I shall continue ignorant of my own condition; and if I do, the ghastliness and deformity that I discover there, make me a perfect monster, and a terror to myself. The matter for reproof and confusion which appears there, is woefully great; and yet the oftener and more narrowly I set about this search, the more lurking abominations still I bring to light. How should it indeed be otherwise, since every corner of my heart is a cage of unclean birds; since every day from my first beginning to sin, hath made additions to the black account; and even now, though sensible of my wretchedness, I do not cease to heap new guilt upon the former? The offences which are plainly before my eyes, I can look upon without any sensible concern; I see that which ought to make me ashamed exceedingly, yet am not the least out of countenance at it: and that which should even break my heart with grief, gives me no manner of uneasiness. But sure this is a mortal symptom, and a sad indication of a damnable state: for do we not conclude that member dead, which feels no pain? Do we not know, by long experience, that the patient is then incurable, when

grown insensible of his disease? And yet, wretch that I am, this is my case. I am thoughtless and dissolute, airy and wanton, and do not take any care to correct my extravagances, or to fix my wandering mind. I confess my sins every day, and yet repeat them, and am not made so wise, either by my own danger and disasters, or those of other men, to avoid the pit, into which I have fallen myself; or seen my brethren fall, or perhaps indeed have thrust them into. Prayers and tears are the best refuge I can take, and subjects in abundance I have ministered for them, by the many evil things I have done, and the good I have neglected to do. But, alas! I find myself not at all touched, as these occasions require. Quite contrary, my devotion is but lukewarmness at the best: nay, I languish, I grow cold, and pray without any manner of warmth; and as to remorse for my sins, my soul is perfectly benumbed and senseless. I know, upon recollection, that I am in a miserable state, and yet cannot shed one tear for my misery; because I have long continued to harden my heart, God hath now made my fault my punishment, and withdrawn the grace of tender tears and godly sorrow from me.

CHAP. XIII.

Conscience is every where.

IT is the fondest imagination in the world, to suppose, that I can either commit sin unobserved, or conceal it after commission; for let the privacy I effect be never so close, still it is not possible to shut out, or run away from my own conscience. This will be sure to bear me company, and it always carries about with it all I have ever laid up there, whether it be good or whether it be evil. There is no trustee to be compared

with this, for fidelity and punctual dealing. Whatever is deposited in its custody is in safe hands, it keeps it for the man as long as he lives, and will be sure to pay down in full tale at the day of death. If I do amiss, this is present with me; if I do well and feel a satisfaction in it, that resentment proves that conscience is with me, and marks my behaviour. It never parts with me in this world, and it will follow me into the next; and wheresoever I am, according to the quality of what I trust it with, it never fails to reproach and shame, or else to commend and exalt me. Thus there is not only an evidence of a judgment, but even the thing itself in every one of our breasts. We have no need to look abroad for justice; since God hath erected a tribunal at home, and so ordered the matter, that those of a man's own household should go through the whole process upon him; for here are informers and witnesses, judges and executioners. For when I break the law, my conscience accuses me, my memory testifies against me, my reason tries and judges me; sensual pleasure is my prison, fear my executioner, and sinful delectation my penalty: for in proportion to the delights which accompanied the sin, the torments are multiplied and heightened in the punishment. And God is just and wise in ordaining that our very sins should prove our punishments, and that the pleasures of sin, and the pains we feel for them, should both spring out of the same root.

CHAP. XIV.

The Three great Enemies of Mankind.

HELP me, O Lord my God, for my enemies have besieged and compassed about my soul; they close me in on every side, and I am so

fast in prison that I cannot get forth: these enemies are the flesh, the world, and the devil. The first I cannot escape from, and as little can I force it to retire at a distance from me. Carry it about with me I must, for God hath laid this burden, and fastened it upon me: to kill it I am not allowed, to sustain it I am obliged in my own defence: and yet when I am too liberal in cherishing, I do but strengthen an adversary, and put it more in his power to do me mischief: for if I eat what is sufficient, and that yield strength and good nourishment, the very health and sound constitution of my body threatens danger to my soul. Nor does this domestic foe fight against me singly, but assists and combines with others; for the world lays close siege too, and my five senses are the avenues, by which it enters and attacks me. These give free passage to the fatal darts, and here death makes its approaches to my heart. My eye gazes about, and by admitting variety of engaging objects, draws off my attention from the one thing necessary. The ear is open to pleasing sounds, and these disturb the mind in its meditations. The smell amuses, and obstructs serious thinking. The tongue is lavish in speech, and lets itself loose to flattery and falsehood. The touch kindles impure fires, takes every slight occasion to defile the man with lust, and unless the first motions be carefully guarded, and resolutely rejected, it seizes, vanquishes, and inflames the whole body: the steps by which it advances in this conquest are, first to tickle the imagination with unclean thoughts, then to pollute the mind with unlawful delight, and at last to subdue the reason by consenting to wicked inclinations. Lastly, the devil bends his bow, and makes ready his arrows within the quiver. This enemy is the most formidable, because he assaults me unseen; and the dangers which I cannot descry, are the

most difficult to be declined. He lays his snares secretly, and says, *no eye shall see them*; snares in the prosperity, and plenty, and all the riches and blessings of the present life, which we abuse and convert to vicious purposes, and so are drawn away by their allurements. Nor does this fowler only lay snares, but birdlime too, to entangle his prey. For such is the love of these good things we possess, fondness for our friends and relations, greedy desires of honours and preferments, the pleasures of sense; all which stick fast about the soul, glue it down, and fetter its wings, that it cannot soar in contemplation to the delightful mansions of the heavenly Sion. These are the lime-twigs scattered in our way by the hunter of souls; and the arrows he lets fly at us, are our own unruly passions, anger, and envy, and ambition, and all the inordinate affections that wound us in our animal life. And who is able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked discharged so thick, so fierce, and so well pointed, that the whole armour of God and the shield of faith, are not always so successful, as to preserve even very good men from being sometimes hit, and sorely hurt by them.

O state full of hazard, full of horror! a perpetual war without any truce or cessation of arms; a siege never to be raised, but by demolishing of the walls about the citadel; ambuscades and mines every where, thick fire and sharp swords laying at us on all sides; that is, temptations and dangers in each action and accident of my life. What course soever I bend, there is no security. The events which delight, and those which grieve and pain us, do either of them minister just grounds of fear. Hunger and fulness of bread, sleep and watching, toil and ease are all engaged against me, and attack me in different methods. Mirth and complaisance are as much to be sus-

fast in prison that I cannot get for or freedom of
 mies are the flesh, the world, an^d ate into profuse
 first I cannot escape from, and a great offence to
 it to retire at a distance from^e under no less appre-
 with me I must, for God^l or the pleasure and ease
 fastened it upon me: ^e are apt to abate our care,
 to sustain it I am ^e very mistaken notions of
 and yet when I am ^e difficulties of an afflicted and
 but strengthen ^e make it like bitter physic; the
 his power to ^e which we gather from its unpalatable
 is sufficient. ^e that it should be too strong for
 nourishment. The sins that I commit in
 tion of ^e to be dreaded as of worse conse-
 Nor do ^e my more manifest and notorious
 but ^e for what men do not see they cannot
 wor^d; and when we are not restrained by ap-
 th^e ^e expressions of a rebuke, the temptation is more
 readily entertained, and we indulge our vices
 Avidly and without reserve. All which con-
 sidered, we have reason to move as men in an
 enemy's country, to have our eyes about us, and
 look behind upon every little noise, nor take one
 step, till we have first viewed well the ground,
 and how the forces are posted that come against
 us. The flesh tempts me to effeminacy and
 sloth, the world to vanity and deluding pleasures,
 the devil to malice and envy. As oft as any
 carnal imagination strikes upon the mind, and
 vehemently importunes me, as oft as I feel the
 anxious care of making provision for meat and
 drink, and sleep, and other necessities, refresh-
 ments and pleasures, which tend to the ease or
 ornament of the body, these are properly the
 suggestions of the flesh. When I find my heart
 swell with pride and ambition, when I thirst after
 honour, or riches, or grandeur; when I am
 tempted to value myself highly, and to despise
 others; all these aspiring and greedy thoughts
 are in a more peculiar manner owing to the world.

But when I feel myself stirred to anger and rage, to revenge and spite, and bitterness of spirit, these are the insinuations of the devil, and as resolutely to be withstood, as if I saw the fiend himself, and entered into personal combat with him : for these temptations and wicked suggestions are the arms he makes use of against us in our spiritual warfare, and therefore we ought to be as much upon our guard against them, as we would against damnation itself. His part is to put these evil imaginations into our hearts, and ours obstinately to deny them access, or else to drive them out again without delay. And let this encourage us to a manful resistance, that every time we withstand a temptation, and continue inflexible, we put the prince of darkness to the rout, we bring joy and triumph to the blessed angels, and glory to Almighty God. For it is by his command that we encounter this terrible adversary, and by the succour of his grace that we keep, and gain the field. His eye is upon us throughout the whole conflict; he sustains us when we feel ourselves overpowered, rallies us again when we give ground, pours in fresh recruits when we are tired and spent ; and crowns us when we have at last got the victory.

CHAP. XV.

MY flesh was first produced out of dust and clay, and all the voluptuous and sensual imaginations which tend to the gratifying this part of me, plainly confess the vileness, and resemble the filth of that earthly principle, to which they owe their birth. So do the vanity and distracting anxiety of the worldly, and the malice of diabolical suggestions, retain a tincture of their several authors. But above all, the devil places

the chief of his confidence, and promises himself success in nothing more, than in the assistance of the flesh: for open enemies are less capable of doing mischief abroad, than false friends and conspirators at home. Now the flesh is in constant league with the devil, and contrives to subvert and destroy us: this inclination proceeds from its being born and bred up in sin; corrupted with vicious dispositions in its first original, but yet much more corrupted by actual transgressions, and the force of wicked customs. This is the true account of its lusting perpetually against the spirit, of its repining at affliction, and growing presently impatient of that discipline and those trials, which God in his wisdom sees fit to chastise and exercise it by; of its filling the mind with uneasy reflections, insinuating unlawful desires, rebelling against the dictates of sober reason, and submitting to no restraints of godly fear. The sly old serpent strikes in with this domestic enemy, assists its treacherous designs, and makes use of it as his instrument: for the adversary of souls hath no other desire, no other endeavour or end that employs him, but only the destruction of mankind in general.

This is he that continually busies himself in plotting of mischief. He accosts us with flattering pretences, he hath a thousand arts of enticing and betraying us, and imposes upon our judgments with incredible subtlety and address. He secretly inspires wicked inclinations; and, when the venom once hath taken place, inflames the disease; he sows the seeds of discord, heightens quarrels and angry resentments, whets our appetite up to gluttony and intemperance, kindles lust, excites and urges fleshly desires, provides incentives and occasions to sin, contrives that we may neither want strong inclinations to do wickedly, nor inviting opportunities to gratify them, and hath an

unspeakable variety of tricking ways to seduce, assault, and vanquish us. Thus he wounds us with our own weapon, and ties our hands with our own girdle, and turns our flesh, which was given us for a convenience, into an instrument of sin and ruin. The encounter indeed must needs be sharp and hazardous, when the enemy we engage not only is within our quarters, but cannot be otherwise; and the danger must needs be greater still, when we are strangers, and the enemy in his native country. He is in his proper element, we in a state of banishment, foreigners and far distant from our friends and the place of our birth. The frequency and continual attempts of the devil, which never afford us any interval of quiet, are also a fresh addition to our fears; for how shall the soul be continually awake and in a posture of defence? How shall it be a match for that enemy, whose cunning is so much superior to any human prudence, both by the condition of his nature, and by that dexterity in which long practice must needs have rendered him most accomplished and perfect in?

CHAP. XVI.

DELIVER me from mine enemies, O God,
*save me from the rage of them that hate me;
for the mighty are gathered together against me;
and they that thirst for blood, lie in wait for my
soul.* (Psal. lix. 1, 2.) By the assistance of thy
heavenly grace, I desire and resolve from this
day forward to live to my benefit and happiness,
and to redeem that time which hath been hitherto
mis-spent to my infinite detriment and danger:
for sure we ought to employ the term allotted us
in this world, as becomes men who have a lively
hope; that when their perishing bodies shall be

citizens of that heavenly Jerusalem; and dwell secure in their own country, among their dearest friends, ever rejoicing, ever satisfied with good, and yet ever desiring more; and the more diligent a man hath been in the service of God, the larger reward in proportion shall he receive at the hand of his bountiful Master. The condition, though not the meritorious cause of our bliss everlasting, is obedience; and that obedience is accepted according to the sincerity and love from which it proceeds. And this love, as it recommends our services, so does it add to our recompense: for the more fervently we love God, the nearer shall we be suffered to approach, and have the clearer view of him; and the nearer we see, the more still we shall desire to see him, and be the more transported with the sight.

CHAP. XVII.

THE days of man upon earth are but a shadow, always in motion, and he in truth no better than vanity and nothing, even when he seems to be most substantial and at a stay. How foolish is it then for man to lay up treasures upon earth, since both he who heaps them up, and that which is heaped up, are eternally in motion, and pass away like water that runneth apace? What advantage, vain man, dost thou expect in this world? For the advantage of worldly-minded men is destruction, and the end of it is death. O that thou wert wise, that thou wouldest understand, that thou wouldest consider what will happen to thee in the latter days. I know, my soul, a certain person that hath lived in great familiarity with thee for several years, hath always sat at the same table, been fed by thy own hand, slept in thy own bosom, and conversed with thee

notwithstanding these forbidden circumstances, this profligate wretch hath the confidence to *preach God's laws, and take his covenant into his mouth*. He hates reproof and discipline, and casts his Master's word behind his back; *When he sees a thief, he consents unto him, and hath been partaker with the adulterers: he hath slandered and offended his own mother's son*; (Psal. l. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.) and made it his business, by a hard and impenitent heart, to *treasure up wrath against the day of wrath*. (Rom. ii. 5.) He labours to undermine thee in thy most valuable interest, would rob thee of thy inheritance; and thou art so tame, so treacherous to thyself, as not only to revenge, but even to connive at, and not be sensible of the injury: thou givest him not one hard word, nor castest one angry look, but smilest at him while he caresses and fawns upon thee. Thou playest with a scorner, and considerest not that thou art engaged with a mocking Ishmael. This is not a diversion of children, nor a recreation of simplicity and innocence; but a woeful delusion, a malicious persecution, a murdering of thy life. He casts thee into the pit himself had digged for thy destruction. Thou art softened into luxury, and sold to sin, miserably enslaved, and barbarously treated. O wretched man, who shall set thee free from the bond of this misery and reproach! Let God arise, and spoil this strong man, let his enemy fall before him, this despiser of his majesty, this idolatrous worshipper of himself, this lover of the world, this servant of Satan. What dost thou now think of this traitor, this tyrant? If thou resentest his behaviour as it deserves, thou wilt immediately cry out, *He is guilty of death, let him be crucified*. Do not therefore dissemble thy just indignation, do not delay thy revenge; let not thine eye spare, neither let it pity him. Crucify this man of sin boldly, resolutely,

reflections, but all to no effect, till thou study and read, and thoroughly understand thy own self. Give heed therefore to this, above all other studies, consider, and resolve to continue no longer ignorant of the state of thy own soul. Read thus, that thou mayest love God, that thou mayest encounter and overcome the world, and every enemy that opposes thy peace and salvation. So shall thy labour end in rest, thy sorrow clear up into joy: and when the darkness of this transitory life scatters and wears off, a glorious morning shall dawn in comfort unspeakable, and the meridian sun of righteousness shall warm thee into new life, and shed his bright beams upon thy head. Then shalt thou see the bridegroom, and his mystical spouse in perfect unity and inviolable love; and rejoice at the marriage feast of that Lamb, *who was dead, and is alive again*, even that Lord of glory, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE END.





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